THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

Founded 1815

JOHN PELL *Editor*
JOSEPH AUSLANDER *Associate Editor*
JAMES H. VAN ALEN *Managing Editor*

VOLUME 242 WINTER 1936–37 NUMBER 2

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	J. P.	227
Jefferson Boone. *Verse*	VERNE BRIGHT	232
Radical — American Style *A review of Mainland, by Gilbert Seldes*	LEWIS GALLANTIÈRE	241
Czars Fall on Hollywood	THORNTON DELEHANTY	258
Orchard Site. *Verse*	ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN	269
Puerto Rico: Old Woman in a Shoe	ERIC M. MATSNER, M.D. AND WILLIAM LAIDLAW	270
George Bellows, Athlete	EDWARD M. BARROWS	288
Carol for Christmas. *Verse*	TRISTRAM LIVINGSTONE	302
Our Economic Blue Laws	RICHARD DANA SKINNER	303
Heaven Doesn't Matter	CHANNING POLLOCK	311
The White Cathedral. *Verse*	DANIEL WHITEHEAD HICKY	317
The Traveler Rests. *Story*	WILSON MCCARTY	318
To My Son. Need of Iron. *Verse*	WILLIAM R. BENÉT	332
"Preserve, Protect, and Defend —"	MALCOLM R. EISELEN	334
Those Foolish Leaves. *Sonnet*	ELIZABETH MORROW	350
Our Native Humor	SCULLEY BRADLEY	351
American Credo. *Verse*	RICHARD S. REYNOLDS	363
Connecticut Attic	WINIFRED WELLES	364
Nightingales. *Verse*	LEONORA SPEYER	372
Crusade from Santa Fé	ERNA FERGUSSON	376
Book Reviews		
The Flowering of New England By Van Wyck Brooks	LLOYD MORRIS	388
Three Books on Literary Criticism	GORHAM MUNSON	394
Three Worlds By Carl Van Doren	AMY LOVEMAN	400
Jefferson in Power By Claude G. Bowers	HERSCHEL BRICKELL	403
General Grant's Last Stand By Horace Green	DOUGLASS DEBEVOISE	407
An American Ideal By Arthur Bryant	JOHN J. SLOCUM	409
Rich Land, Poor Land By Stuart Chase	H. J. SPINDEN	411
An American Doctor's Odyssey By Victor Heiser	RICHARD M. PIERSON, M.D.	416
Three Books of Poetry	MILDRED BOIE	421
More Than Bread By Joseph Auslander	CHARLES HANSON TOWNE	428
Heads and Tales By Malvina Hoffmann	ELEANOR L. VAN ALEN	429
Two Historical Novels	EDWARD J. CLARKE	433
The Long Night By Andrew Lytle	CHAUNCEY STILLMAN	438
The Enchanted Voyage By Robert Nathan	THOMAS CALDECOT CHUBB	441
Death of a Man By Kay Boyle	HELEN MORAN	443
Contributors' Column		446

The NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW: Published quarterly by the North American Review Corporation. Publication office, Rumford Building, Concord, N. H. Editorial and executive office, 597 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. Price $1.00 a copy; $4.00 per year; Canada, $4.25; foreign countries, $4.50. Entered as second-class matter Dec. 18, 1920, at the post office at Concord, N. H., under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

Copyright, 1936, by the North American Review Corporation: John Pell, *President* and *Treasurer;* David M. Figart, *Secretary.*
Title registered U. S. Patent Office.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW
VOLUME 242 WINTER 1936–37 NUMBER 2

Foreword

PUBLISHERS began to realize a few years ago that history was a salable product. Since then the history of almost everything has been written but, as yet, no one has undertaken to explore the history of man's attitude towards himself. Yet there is nothing more characteristic of each of the world's civilizations than the attitude of its people towards themselves. Europe of the Middle Ages, for example, was dominated by the idea of the fall of man. A certain few, the elect, were destined to enter the portals of Heaven, but the rest of mankind was headed for Hell, and there was nothing to do about it. Under these circumstances the people accepted the fact that they were exploited and robbed by tyrants or by priests and nobles without complaint. Such was their destiny, they were taught, and they believed it.

In England, in the seventeenth century, certain philosophers began to question the validity of this view and a school of thought developed the theory that man in a natural state is not fallen but on the contrary a noble creature. The ruling class paid little attention to these assertions but the writings of Locke and Hobbes were translated into French and the Courts of Louis XIV and Louis XV, dominated as they were by women, found intellectual amusement in their ideas. Rousseau dramatized them and, to the astonishment of the ladies of the court, the people became convinced that they were not in-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tended to be downtrodden serfs. For a century thereafter political thinking was dominated by the idea of the virtue and intelligence of the common man. Since his vices sprang from society rather than from himself, the more he was left alone, the better he would behave. Democracies, such as our Republic, were designed with an eye to curbing the powers of the rulers rather than of the people: the less government there was, the more chance there would be for man's virtues to shine forth in all their natural glory.

By one of those coincidences which have made some philosophers believe that the guiding intelligence of the universe is blessed with a sense of humor the rise of Democracy was accompanied by the rise of the machine. The dreams of Rousseau had hardly materialized in the French revolution when the development of a practical steam engine brought on the industrial revolution. Freed from the shackles of political tyranny, the people awoke to the chains of economic bondage. Children, working for fourteen hours a day in cotton mills, must have questioned the value of the political liberty which their grandfathers had bought with blood. Furthermore, as Hamilton perceived, the new economic conditions upset the premises of the political theorists: it might be true that man in his natural state was good, but was the dark and dirty interior of a factory his natural state?

In spite of certain defects, the American form of liberal democracy did give to society a fluidity which it had never known before. As a laboratory for the political theories of Rousseau and Jefferson, it failed, because the common man, instead of being in Rousseau's idyllic garden or Jefferson's farm, was driven, more and more, into factories and mines. But what he did gain was a chance to change his state and acquire economic as well

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as political freedom. Such a reward gave to the exceptional man, at least, an incentive to strive for more than bread and by so doing he raised the standard of living of the masses to levels undreamed of in the past.

Material comforts, however, failed to produce in the masses that state of benevolence which the progenitors of liberal democracy had planned for them. Certain philosophers, such as Karl Marx, soon perceived that the industrial revolution had corroded the foundations on which liberalism had been laid. Political liberty simply gave financiers and entrepreneurs an open sesame to exploit the masses for their own benefit. The principal difference between the new exploitation and the old was that in the former anyone might, through his own exertions, become one of the exploiters and the masses did to a considerable extent share in the prosperity which their exploitation produced. The workers in the Ford plant, while helping to enrich Mr. Ford, secured for themselves a standard of living which an eighteenth century nobleman might envy.

Throughout the nineteenth century finance capitalism developed and crystallized while liberal democracy stood still. The epigrams of Jefferson became the platitudes of McKinley. The dream of man's nobility gradually faded until, in Europe, it has disappeared altogether. Clinging to life here, it came to be known as the American dream. The very fact that it received this title showed that no one took it for more than it was, a dream. Jefferson and Lincoln have come to be regarded as transcendent idealists because they really believed in the American dream, but the people themselves have long since accepted a more realistic view. As in the past, the fundamental trend of history is disclosed by the attitude of the people towards themselves.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When individuals think of themselves, they do so in terms of idealization, their imaginations create a vision of what they want to be, rather than of what they are, and, as a result, experience is an extended process of disillusionment. Since mankind is a conglomeration of individuals, its characteristics must be identical with those of its component parts. Mankind's attitude towards itself can be described as a series of dreams, and history as the record of futile attempts to reconcile these dreams with reality. The efforts of those who wish to understand the present age should be devoted to analyzing the dream which has replaced the dream of liberal democracy.

Such an astute observer as Walter Lippmann calls it "one of the most enchanting myths which ever captured the human imagination." He says in the *Atlantic:*

> Out of the union of Science with Government there is to issue a Providential State, possessed of all knowledge and of the power to enforce it. Thus at last the vision of Plato is to be realized: reason will be crowned and the sovereign will be rational. The philosophers are to be kings; that is to say, the prime ministers and their commissars, are to follow the engineers, biologists, and economists who will arrange the scheme of things. The men who know are to direct human affairs and the directors are to listen to those who know. Though the Providential State of the future is to have all the authority of the most absolute state of the past, it is to be different; consecrated technicians are to replace the courtiers and the courtesans of the king, and the irresistible power of government is to serve mankind.

This description of the dream which has captivated the imagination of the world shows how completely man's attitude towards himself has changed. He no longer looks upon himself as self-sufficient and capable of molding his own destiny. The humility of the middle ages has returned but now it is not to God that man looks for succor but to the Providential State. Heaven is no longer to be in the future but here and now, an earthly paradise

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

molded by the Ogpu, the Reichfuhrer and the P.W.A.

Those who fail to recognize the significance of this new attitude will be completely bewildered by the events of the next few years. Each of the great dreams of history has, for a while at least, rolled forward with the force of a tidal wave, sweeping before it the barriers of tradition. The renaissance and the reformation, as recent examples, spread over Europe like plagues of locusts, losing their force only when the people realized, once again, that millenniums are not produced by dreams.

Although every dream, like a soap bubble, ends by becoming nothing, there is a period when it shimmers in the sunlight with a beauty that belies description. It is at such times, when mythical bubbles danced before their eyes, that men have been inspired to perform great deeds and create great works of art. Each successive dream has vanished but the Acropolis, the Gothic cathedrals, Elizabethan literature, baroque music remain.

If the age to come is to hold less economic freedom than the age which has passed, it is possible that it will contain more artistic inspiration. American painting, for example, may be receiving a stronger impetus from the Treasury art project which is providing competitions and assignments for hundreds of painters in every part of the country, than it received from the great collectors who paid millions for El Grecos and Rembrandts but did relatively little to foster the growth of indigenous art. If, at the end of the depression, there are fewer theaters on Broadway than in the past, it is also true that there are a great many more throughout the country. Perhaps, after all, the mass enthusiasm which was exhibited at the last election, will enrich the future by producing one or two good buildings or an exquisite poem, before the lovely bubble has disappeared.

J. P.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jefferson Boone

VERNE BRIGHT

Jefferson Boone, from the cabin door,
Watched the dancers on the puncheon floor,
Gripped his brass-bound squirrel rifle
With hooked hawk-hands unused to trifle
With proper game; the fiddle's wail
Was a panther crouched on a forest trail. . . .
The shuffle of moccasined feet beat a tune
Of portent into his brain; the white moon,
From its perch in the sky, like a white owl, peered
Through the sycamore trees where the torches leered
Like gnomes in the dark. . . . He saw, he heard
Margaret Byrne, her voice of a bird,
Her hair like cornsilk under the sun,
Her eyes aglint like waters that run
In the white-birch grove when April is warm
To the new-sown seed on the creek-bottom farm,
Her linsey skirts like a grapevine curled
About her limbs of a gipsy. . . . Skirled
The music swifter; the free-heart laughter
Fluttered its wings at the dusty rafter.
Flushed of face and flashing limbed,
Joy of life and beauty brimmed
Her heart: all colors of love and dream
Lurked in the golden rushlight gleam,
All the surge of love's despair
Flamed from the foxfire of her hair.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jealousy was a shadowed fist
Poised above her; a graying mist
Entangled her feet, as winter-furled
Frosts smoke in the forest, whirled
By winds of hate. . . .
Mind vexed and strange
Jeff watched the prancers cross and change:
Swing your partner, circle to the right,
Won't get home till the morning light!
He heard the men of Femme Osage,
Men of St. Charles and Charette, engage
In banter with woods-runners from the Lick
And pigeon hunters from Pigeon Creek:
"What's the word from old San Lou'?"
"The Vide Poche gals — " "Old Sam Blue,
Saw him once on the Gasconade
Trapping and making a heap of trade
From the Sauks with beads and frumpery — "
"I'd dose him good with sassafras tea — "
"Moi, by gar, one tam I saw
On Purgatoire a Shian squaw,
Enfant de garce, elle etait belle — "
"Hugh Glass once on the Musselshell
Fout a b'ar — " The tales went round
Freighted with wonder to astound
The hearers. . . . "Kit Carson had a duel
On Siskadee with a Nor'west fool,
And dropped him cold: 'twere an Injun gal
From the 'Rapahoes. . . ." "Injuns! Hell
'S full of Injuns!"
Hugo Coles

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pounded the floor with his rawhide soles,
Out of the tumult with a voice like Bashan's
Bull, called the dancers to their stations,
Ranged the couples and called the turns:
Joab Wynne from the Jim Creek burns,
Jeremy Pinch and Red Mike Flynn,
James Gaunt, elder, and James, the younger,
Swayed to the notes of the violin,
Beat the boards to the banjo's clangor;
With Mary Brady and Martha Challow,
And Cherry LeMoyne from Frenchman's Hollow.
And there were rivermen, lithe and swart:
Jean Choteau and Pierre Le Mort,
Dupré St. Clair, ready for fun,
Light of heart and quick to anger
As the gleaming flint of a rifle-gun.
Blades from the hills in doeskin shirts,
Beaded and flounced like the dress of a girl;
Horsemen flourishing buckskin quirts,
Joined in the music-maddened whirl.

Mush-a-ring-a-ring-a-rah,
Whack fol-de-dady O!
Come swing your lady O!
There's whiskey in the jug.

Swing Sally, swing Lucy,
We'll meet you by and by:
Hound dog barking up a sycamore tree,
Raccoon climbing high!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Juba. . . . Juba. . . .
Hear the fiddles sing;
Banjo's thrumming, rafters humming,
Dancers in a ring:
Buffalo girls from Arkansaw,
Corn-fed girls from old Missou'. . . .
Heel and toe, around you go,
Swing your lady-lu!

All hands round the whiskey jug,
Thump that floor awhile;
Bear cub sliding on a slick-ellum tree
In good old-fashioned style;
Bumble bees in a hickory stump
Buzzing a rancy tune:
Buffalo gals can't you come out tonight
To dance by the light of the moon?

Jean Choteau, come pat your time,
Osage Charlie, shake your heel,
Hugo Coles, come shout your rhyme:
Salute your partners, cut and wheel,
Allemande right and walk her round
To "possom in the brush pile," "taters in the ground,"
"Honey in the mush-pot, sweetest ever found"
Pigeon-wing and reel.

Down the middle and hands across,
You, Rube Herring, thump it,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sachez to the left and swing to the right,
Back step, front step, everybody hump it;
Polish up the puncheons like the devil tanning hide,
Shuffle up the center, clatter down the side,
Happy as a bridegroom kissing of his bride
Till Gabriel blows his trumpet.

Hear the lads a-shouting,
Hear the girls sing:
Tom-cat on the fence rail,
Pussy in the ring. . . .
We'll dance the stars out of the sky,
Hugo, call the tune:
Oh, buffalo gals can't you come out tonight
To dance by the light of the moon.

From tune to tune old Dave and Derry shunted:
First a lonesome slow repeating piece
That mourned like misting winds or spirits hunted
Through a nightmare dream; then in a swift release
The music rushed like water; then like bees
Humming over flowers it drifted slow,
Soft as evefall, sweet as honeyflow.

Margaret's feet were light: in flings and reels
She cut the short dog fine; the tunes rilled out:
Ballad pieces, square fours. . . . Cracking his heels,
Rube Herring stepped a jig that brought a shout
From the old ones hunkered down three deep about

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The cabin walls. The dust motes glowed among
The dancers like a visionary song.

Brown Betty perched, apart, upon the hob,
Brimming with amber liquor newly drawn
From Jotham Trenchard's still. Like a bedlam mob
The frolickers pranced and shuffled; the swift din
Of feet and fiddle fast and faster ran
Unmindful of the hour: the banjo twanged
The scamper-down, "When Big Harpe, He Were
Hanged."

With a burning hate searing his brain Jeff stood
Aloof, his eyes like flint in the rushlight glow.
Margaret rollicked by in giddy mood
Clinging to Reuben's hand. As at a blow
Jeff winced. Then: "Sashay, swing your pardners, ho!"
Old Hugo called the turn. Rube and the girl
Flung themselves into the dizzy whirl.

Then furtively Rube's lips brushed on her hair. . . .
The hot blood swept Jeff's face, pent devils lurked
Behind his eyes. Rube leered. Hate teetered there
Between them. Margaret laughed and lightly perked
Her head a-watching each. Sudden Jeff jerked
Brown Betty from the hob, and Rube's knife gleamed
Like a sliver of quick fire where the rushlights streamed.

"Boys, outen!" Nate Boone's voice broke through the spell
That held the folk afeared. "Such goings-on

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ain't fitten for womern's eyes. Outen!"
"Hell!"
Rube Herring swore, "I'll fight him, knife or gun."
Then Jeff: "Rock Tavern, 'gin tomorrow's sun.
Happen ye'll bring your rifle." Feet held slow
Nightward he moved into the moon's white glow.

A fire burned world's edge, the wakening birds
Stammered goldenly, as Jefferson Boone
Fronted Rube Herring where the broken sherds
Of Tavern Rock strewed earth. Far off a loon,
With a phantom cry, broke silence. The late moon,
Ship-wise sailed to harbor. A wind sprang up —
The dawn wind, bearing life as in a cup.

But death crept evilly among the stones,
Though life poured on warm lips, though keen desire
Surged in the blood. . . .
Like posts the rifle-guns
Stood planted at each foot till the swift word, "Fire!"
Released the sentient spring. Two points of dire
Flame leaped to a meeting: quick flesh flinched:
Eye grappled eye in hatred: hard teeth clenched.

A crimson stain of blood grew on Jeff's cheek;
Rube searched his breast with horny fingers. Again
The ramrods tamped hard lead eager to seek
The vital furrow to the hearts of men.
But as his stick went home Rube Herring's span

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dwindled to nothingness. . . . Then someone said:
"Rube's hit. . . . Right through the heart. . . . By
God, he's dead!"

Then Nathan Boone spoke slowly: "Jeff, what's done
Is done all-ever. But 'tain't nary use
Ye lingering here-a-by. Sheriff's bound to run
Ye into San Louie jail, happen the news
Of what's to do has set his feet to cruise
The trails out this-a-way. Far and a-wide
Beyand our home-place, I reckon ye'd best abide
A spell of time."

"I reckon that's certainty.
Beza Clark ain't letting his moccasins grow
With moss, 'tain't like," Sam Redstone said. "Now, me,
I'm heading up Missoury. If'n ye go
Cootering along of me a year or so
This-all will thin away and be forgot
Same as a snow in a Chinook, liker than not.

"This child's half froze for the trail. Come, put her there
And we'll be getting on."
"I can't go lest
I've talked with Margaret Byrne."
"Let be! As far
As I can squint ye've seed 'er enough to rest
Ye a right smart scant of days. This coon heads west
Short of an hour. *Sauve qui peut*!" he said.
Jeff's thoughts were millstones whirring in his head.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"It's better ye prance," said Nathan. "Beza Clark,
He'll hunt ye like a fall buck 'gin ye stay. . . .
I'm giving ye Pap's old gun. Now look ye, hark!
It's done a mort of killing in its day,
But all its killing was honest, so to say,
In fair fight, mind ye: happen ye keep it free
Of tainted blood. Do ye hark, now, Jeff?" said he.

"Dan set a heap of store by that there gun,"
Sam Redstone dreamed old trails. "A-yes-siree!
It's made a mort of skulking redskins run
Afore your time, young mister. Once, by Gee!
On Kaintuck River, Dan'l says, says he:
'Injuns is Injuns, but, harkee, guns is guns
That'll take and keep this Westland for our sons,
And our sons' sons, clean out to the ocean-sea.'

"He said that . . . and I reckon he was right.
A-first Kaintuck, Ohio, and then Missou',
And next comes Rocky Mountains. . . . If'n a fight
Or two's to pay, what's odds? Afore we're through
Oregon and Californy, too,
The lot on 'em will heir to us, from Kaw
To the River of the West . . . that is the law!"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Radical—American Style. A Review*

LEWIS GALANTIÈRE

WHAT IS CONSEQUENT and valid in Mr. Seldes's book, *Mainland*, is its emotion. Mr. Seldes has America — all the America he knows and has read about — stirring and churning within him. Some of this mess of feeling has percolated into his mind and has been poured out in a book of over four hundred pages, fragmentarily historical, sketchily descriptive, and mainly polemical. It is the work of a first-rate pamphleteer — a rare kind of work in our day. Time and again the author abuses the privilege of exaggeration. Over and over he elects to ignore reality in favor of "the prejudices with which (this book) began." Deliberately, he abandons an openness of mind and a sense of proportion native to him, in order to drive home points with that concentrated earnestness characteristic of the moment of feeling. The result is not so much a book as a man, a friend with whom one has spent three days in passionate argument, in the course of which he (as well as oneself) has been guilty of heedless self-contradiction, enormities of illogic, insistent assertion about which one feels that it is as erroneous in fact, or inaccurate in application, as it is right in sentiment. And since *his* words have been taken down and printed, and one's own not, the game of criticism is unequal. One can scrutinize his arguments anew without revealing the insecurity that was in one's own position. Still, to publish a book is to invite such treatment; I will indulge myself.

A summary of any book is bound to do it injustice, but the following seems to me to present Mr. Seldes's position with reasonable fairness. He favors democracy as against

* *Mainland*. By Gilbert Seldes. Scribner's, $3.00.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

both communism and fascism, saying in substance that democracy is American and the others are European. He favors the farmer as against the manufacturer and the banker: the farmer is American because the land is American; the others are un-American because "money," finance, and emphatically international trade are un-American. He favors some sort of credit system (nowhere described or defined) and is against the existing monetary system because — again he does not say clearly why, but I suspect it is because he believes the vulgar error that under our system, the bankers plot to "create" or "destroy" money, and the "money power" should be "in the hands of the people." He is against a scheme of public finance which involves a national debt, and believes that repudiation of debt is in the national interest. He is impatient, to say the least, of those who compare America and Europe to the disparagement of America, though quite ready to make this comparison to the disparagement of Europe. He puts faith in the "engineer" as the savior. He is the enemy of every sort of absolutism.

The foundation upon which this book rests is Mr. Seldes's economic doctrine; and what makes the book difficult to discuss as a whole is that that doctrine is nowhere coherently elucidated. Instead, it is revealed from time to time in allusive and accusatory fragments, the more substantial of which I must take space to deal with separately. The core of the theses nailed up by our new Luther is in these two sentences:

> The taking of the land is the central event of American history, its basis and principle and unit of measurement. . . . Before the Revolution the upland farmer was fighting against the plantation owner at the river mouth, and in the 1930's the wheat grower and hog raiser were fighting against the banker on the Hudson.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The first sentence here quoted obviously means that the settlement of the continent beyond the Alleghenies gave America the pioneer spirit and the pioneer *mores* out of which grew those phenomena that may be called specifically American. With such a declaration, nobody could possibly quarrel; just as nobody could quarrel with the general view that America is *sui generis*, and is not "like" Europe. But Mr. Seldes argues much more than this from "the taking of the land." He argues that the western farmer is a better fellow than the rest of us, that he is truly one hundred percent American whereas we are tainted with European culture. He argues that the farmer is the *sole* repository of the American tradition; that the farm-granges and the Populist movement as summed up in the career and ideas of William Jennings Bryan are the *only* representatives of true American action and "ideology" — treating Alexander Hamilton as an alien who foisted European banking and the idea of a national debt upon us; ignoring John Marshall, who gave to America its rigid notion of property rights as well as of the paramountcy of the Federal government in interstate matters (and thus, perhaps, preserved the American continent for a single flag); saying not a word about any Easterner of eminence who shaped the destinies of the country — not Washington, not Monroe, not the Madison of the Constitution, not the Webster of the Reply to Hayne — save in contempt of Franklin, the Europeanized proponent of thrift (savings is one of his detestations).

He argues that land and money were and are at war, and that the farmer's enemy is "the banker on the Hudson," there being no bankers, presumably, in Chicago, or St. Louis, or Minneapolis, or Los Angeles. That banker, together with the manufacturer, is held responsible for "the general tendency to separate the farmer first

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from ownership of his land and then from the land altogether." The banker presumably forecloses the farmer and the manufacturer lures him into the factory at less than subsistence wages. The basis of Mr. Seldes's notion of farmer-banker relationships is bound up with a monetary theory whose obscurity I have already mentioned and shall be obliged to refer to again. Specimens of the kind of statement I call obscure and am unable to relate to any sort of reality, are these:

> . . . the quarrel was whether land or money should rule America. . . . money was the common European commodity, while the richness and availability of the land was the unique American element. (p. 146)
>
> The farmer . . . felt that America was never meant to be a demonstration of European or international economic principles. (p. 203)
>
> . . . America, being unorthodox in all things, did not need a financial system blessed by book and bell. (p. 203)

The second of these statements is truly bewildering. What the farmer felt about European economics would unquestionably be difficult to find out, because there is literally no such thing as European economics. Europeans have been mercantilists, physiocrats, free-traders, bimetallists, Socialists . . . anything you like. Such a phrase, in the mouth of a politician, would be demagoguery, incitement to suspicion. In a sober essay it has no place at all. As for the third quotation, it is as good as saying that Henry Ford can build motorcars in defiance of principles of thermodynamics which might have the misfortune to be enunciated by European physicists.

But the first of these assertions is the most baffling of the lot. If Mr. Seldes will open Sumner's *History of American Currency* he will learn how early that "European commodity," money, and even paper money, was in circulation in America; and, to go to the other extreme, if he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will look into Hubbard's *Soviet Money and Finance* he will see what place money and the price system take even in a non-capitalist society. To employ the dichotomy, land-money, and to describe the first as a thing of virtue and the second as a thing of evil, the first as representing all the pioneer-farmer asked to have and the second as that which the Eastern exploiter forced upon the West, is not very meaningful nor is it a truthful metaphor.

Following the Ordinance of 1787, there was such an orgy of speculation in American land as the country was never again to witness. Roosevelt (*Winning of the West*), says, for example:

> The newcomer (into the then West) of any means was sure not only to try to get a large estate for his own use, but also to procure land beyond any immediate need, so that he might hold it until it rose in value.

Speculation and litigation over title to land are the "economics" that the opening up of the West first taught the settlers, rather than any sort of supra-money idealism. And this teaching persisted throughout the country's history, with the undeniable result that the American farmer time and again bankrupted himself out of his greed for money. The central fact about the American land is that it rose, irregularly but persistently, in price and in value as the decades rolled round; and this fact inescapably tempted the farmer to think of land more in terms of real estate than of crops. It is not easy to find evidence (I shan't say there is none) that the American farmer loves his land nearly as much as our city-dwelling author does. In no country does the farmer possess romantic notions about the land. Farmers are realists; they love property, not "the good earth." And Mr. Seldes implies a certain agreement with this when he writes (p. 377), "The American farmer was never an agrarian.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He extended his holdings instead of cultivating his inheritance . . . "

A reader somewhat familiar with American history will gather from *Mainland* that its author has been deeply influenced by the nineteenth century Populist revolt. Populism, it will be recalled, was much more than an economic theory. It was an important and a vital movement of protest against government in the interest of Big Business. Politically, it brought a number of reforms — direct election of senators; initiative, referendum, and recall — which corrected old abuses and, as it turned out, established new ones. On the economic side its record is less attractive. It proceeds from the greenback boys of the Civil war through Bryanism to the late Mr. Lemke. Its "economics" took the form of a violent demand for soft money and progressive inflation, as means for the establishment of differentials favoring farm prices and farm debt. Mr. Seldes assumes that because there was such a demand in the Mississippi valley, it represented a specific, exclusive, and inherently American concept. This is not the case. In every country where you have a large farm population, where you have crops raised for export, where you have a heavy farm-mortgage load, you have as corollary the "economics" of Populism, whenever the trade cycle turns downwards. Examples pullulate. For instance: during the Great Depression of 1929–1932, Australia and New Zealand, two regions embraced in the sterling area, fixed their exchanges on London at 125 of their own currency to 100 English pounds sterling. Think of England as the Atlantic seaboard and the Dominions as the Mississippi valley, and you will readily see what this means — that the cost to a foreigner of the "seaboard's" exports is twenty-five percent less than the cost to him of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Valley's" exports. In Hungary they play this game with a Boletta Fund out of which come governmental subsidies to grain exporters. In France, thanks to restrictions on grain imports and governmental handouts to the peasants, the internal price of wheat was the equivalent of $2.50 a bushel at a time when the world price was less than $1.00 — which is putting the British Empire example the other way round. On the farm-debt side the "exclusively American" fashion of balancing the national economy may be illustrated from the experience of Yugoslavia, where the Government and its Agrarian Bank have recently lifted off the farmer's shoulders 50 percent of his aggregate debt and have reduced all interest on his debt to a flat 3 percent. The quarrel may at bottom be between those who want exploitation by the few and those who clamor for exploitation by the many; it is certainly not between exploitation *à l'Européenne* and exploitation *à l'Américaine*, for the evidence suggests that they come to pretty much the same thing.

Concerning what the banker did to the farmer, the author is eloquent but never specific, and his most emphatic statements relate ordinarily to theory and are unsupported by evidence. Thus, he says that between the Civil war and the end of the last century, "we see the complete destruction of the domestic market by the triumphant plutocrat." (p. 286) This destruction is not visible in his pages nor deducible from the census statistics. That there was enormous and outrageous exploitation during these years is undeniable. It was the great age of "the public be damned." But crackpot theory can neither demonstrate nor cure such a situation. On p. 287 we read that in these forty years "the buying power of the farmer was completely destroyed by reducing the amount of money in circulation." Now, it does

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not in the least follow that because there is reduction of the amount of money in circulation, there must be destruction of purchasing power. But leaving aside the economics of this sentence, let us see if what it asserts is true.

In 1860 there was a total of 617 million dollars in circulation — 307 million in hand-to-hand money and 310 million in bank deposits. Following the wartime inflation, this total rose in 1865 to 1,529 million. There was a proper and necessary housecleaning of the national finances after the Civil war. This housecleaning Mr. Seldes calls "destruction of buying power." All one can say is that where it does not take place you may have instead the inflations that afflicted Germany, Austria, Poland, and most of Europe fifteen years ago. The desirability of such an alternative is at least questionable. However, despite the housecleaning, by 1875 the total of money in circulation was seventy percent higher than in 1865; the 1890 total of notes, coin, and bank deposits was three times as great as the 1865 figure; and the 1900 total was seven hundred percent of the 1865 total. If Mr. Seldes thinks (as he may) that bank deposits are not money, I offer him these figures of notes and coin in circulation: $15.30 per capita in 1875 and $26.90 in 1900, despite a simultaneous increase in population from 47,600,000 to 76,300,000. Surely there are better ways of thundering against the devil than by excursions into holy-roller theology and mis-quotation of Holy Writ.

Is it a fact, we may now ask, that manufacturers, influenced by bankers, lured men off the farm and into the factories? Between 1880 and 1900 we had a vast immigration. Many of these immigrants settled in cities. In these years the proportion of Americans living in rural communities declined from 70.3 percent to 60.0 percent of the total population, but — the absolute number living

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLIC LIBRARY
NEWARK, OHIO

in rural communities rose by 39 percent from 35,380,000 to 45,615,000 people, and the acreage sown to wheat and cotton increased by 37 percent. There is no indication here that the land had been deprived of the hands necessary to feed the country. Men were underpaid; slums spread apace; but the misery was in the cities, not on the farms, in this era of industrialization. While this went on, the average value per acre of farm property rose by 79 percent between 1850 and 1900 and it rose *by a further 250 percent during our most intensive period of industrial development*, between 1900 and 1920.

Given the American farmer's land-hogging tradition, there is enough here to explain his successive mortgage-debt headaches without making the eastern seaboard and classical economic theory responsible therefor. The truth about the farmer is the same in every country: nowhere does he make a fortune — but in America, where the farmer sees others making fortunes, he wants one too. In every country the farmer is the victim of the skies and the weather they bring. Flood, drouth, hail undo him. "I won't believe it," says the American farmer, until it happens. "They don't undo my neighbor the tanner, or the blacksmith (now garage-owner), or the buggy manufacturer (now making motorcars)." In all the world the farmer knows that the ant is his model and archetype; but in America he tells himself that all these fixin's advertised in the farm papers and the national magazines are for him as well as for the magazine-writer and the shoe-clerk living in the city. Is he not a real estate trader, or a potential oil magnate? And when the drouth comes, or the hail, our ant with the soul of a grasshopper reaps his reward. Let us agree that it is his destiny rather than his fault; but let us also not seek a scapegoat, unless we are demagogues avid for place or power. Remark, inciden-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tally, that everywhere, in Europe as here, the farmer is able to scrouge out of the Government all that he wants, and long before the factory worker or office employe can get relief. He is powerful because he is truly class-conscious and can vote as one, respond to solicitation in the mass, as the industrial worker can rarely do. Even in the kind of country Mr. Seldes has no use for, the export-industrial country, the farmer is pampered, coddled, subsidized. *Vide* England, Holland, Switzerland.

Next in importance to Mr. Seldes's animadversions upon our monetary system and the evil it works upon the farmer, but written with even greater emphasis and more freedom of expression are the pages devoted to America's international trade. For reasons which once again are not elucidated, the rise of our export trade is said to have had the result that "the buying power of a substantial fraction of our population was disappearing" (p. 288), our exporters (with the bankers urging them on) having learnt to "make money at the expense of some of our own citizens." Those citizens are the farmers. But who in America profited by our export trade more than the farmers? Between 1870 and 1894 there was not a single year in which agricultural exports accounted for less than seventy percent of our total annual exports, so that out of every dollar spent by the foreigner for their purchase, seventy cents went to the farmer. Between 1895 and 1901 the range was between 60.98 and 70.54 percent. Even in 1919–1920, when we were re-equipping war-racked Europe (and taking its gold in payment), farm products sold abroad were as much as 48.6 percent of total foreign sales, while in 1934–35, a year of drouth and restriction here and good crops elsewhere, the figure was still as high as 32.1 percent.

America has always been farmed with a view to export

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trade. Had there been no foreign markets there would have been no American farming on the scale on which that farming took place. It was those sales abroad which helped to pay for our development, for our railroads, our stockyards, our public utilities. Europe had faith in America, poured money into America; and European lenders, bondholders, burnt their fingers here from time to time very much as American bondholders subsequently burnt theirs in Bolivia, or Colombia, or Brazil. We have not always been the lenders: it was gold supplied by European bankers that finally pulled us through the panic of '93. That restriction here, farm protection abroad, and the sharp increase in foreign production of raw cotton which has already taken place, may combine to take external markets permanently away from the American farmer, seems to be growing more likely. But this is quite different from the deliberate surrender of markets; and it means that we may perhaps look for an immense shift in the distribution of our population from rural to urban areas — something Mr. Seldes would contemplate with horror. Concerning our exports of manufactures, meanwhile, I would beg Mr. Seldes to ask Henry Ford whether the farmer would not be paying more for tractors if Ford had no export markets; and to ask General Motors Export a like question about motortrucks.

There is one other item in Mr. Seldes's economics that I must touch upon, though briefly. On p. 294 he interprets with approval the strictures upon banking and investment uttered by one Coyle, as follows:

> By making money travel up and down Main Street, Mr. Coyle means putting it into the hands of the people who will spend it, because no single individual will have so much that he will be tempted to save it for investment. The difference to industry between distributed and concentrated money is obvious.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is positively hair-raising. This is not merely the stamped money scheme originated by Silvio Gesell, whereby hand-to-hand money must circulate a given number of times within a given period if it is not to lose full purchasing power. It is a total and deliberate ignoring of certain elementary facts, to wit, that people do often have a surplus of income beyond their immediate needs; that people who are able cannot be prevented from putting money by against a rainy day; that there is no improvement of farm property, or building and extension of industrial plant, except as the money to pay for such improvement and extension comes out of savings. The reason for this attack upon savings is that investors were sold pups in the 1920's. So they were. But they were also sold the soundest income-securities that a man can own, which they refused to treat as income-securities, treating them instead as poker chips. The American who gambled in Western lands and even in silkworms a century ago was still a gambler in the 1920's. Is it not a significant thing that we speak of a man being worth a million dollars (capital) while the English say he has 50,000 a year (income)? Which is the more realistic?

We come now to the "engineer," that Samson who, with the jaw-bone of Henry Ford,* is to slay the Philistine of "finance-capitalism" — a German phrase denoting divorce of ownership from management. Remark, incidentally, that state-ownership is also a divorce of

* As I write, Henry Ford's statement on the Presidential election is made public. Along with the later books of the deliquescent Professor Beard, it seems to reveal a source of Mr. Seldes's economics. On p. 228 Mr. Seldes, who dislikes classical economics, explains how Mr. Ford "openly defied one of (its) great laws;" on the next page, after characterizing this defiance as "the great American revolution of 1914," he adds honorably, "and had it succeeded the entire course of American history might have been altered." Mr. Seldes will remember how Harold Stearns "defied" the law of gravitation by jumping out of a window at Harvard and *not* remaining suspended in mid-air.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ownership (by the people) from their masters' management. There is a notion abroad that the engineer is a sort of god who can remove our economic ills somewhat as bacteriologists eliminate mosquitoes. The sardonic Veblen, the wit with a message, author of that phrase "trained incapacity" so prettily applicable to engineer-economists, has some responsibility for this notion, but its spread is mainly due to the depression-inspired labors of a plague of amateur statisticians, men with elastic yardsticks measuring intuitively-divined elements. Their standard of measurement is a unit of energy, a purely incidental abstraction useful to technologists and meaningless in economics.

What is fundamental to economics is value, not energy. What underlies every economic activity is choice, the sacrifice of one need to the satisfaction of another need; the decision, for example, to use a given raw material for the production of one article rather than of another; the decision of the consumer to buy one article rather than another; the decision of the worker to choose one occupation rather than another. Incidentally, these decisions by the producer, the consumer, and the worker are the foundation upon which democracy rests; they are what differentiates democracy from fascism, where the producer must manufacture what the State tells him to manufacture; from communism, where the consumer may buy only what the State makes available to him.

The common denominator used for the measurement of economic value is prices, and, measured by this yardstick, the results of production must correspond to the costs of production. Now, technological method is simply a factor of production used by management to lower costs, taking its place with other factors such as wages, interest rates, and so on. Whether technology can be availed of,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and to what extent, is determined by the costs resulting from the calculation of *all* these factors, some of which are in conflict with "pure" technology. A particular American method of machine production may be "efficient" as part of our price and cost structure; yet it will certainly, without any doubt, not be the most efficient method of utilizing the available resources of capital, labor, and raw materials of another country. We have seen how true this has proved in Russia. But there is no need to go abroad for illustration. It can be illustrated from the experience of companies operating in two or more parts of the United States. (I have in mind a metallurgical firm whose Texas plant, for precisely the reasons here given, is unavoidably inferior in equipment to its New York and Pacific coast plants.) Technology is in the most unmistakable sense a means and not an end. The market for a given product and *all* the factors entering into its production, not mechanical gadgets themselves, are what determine the processes employed.

I have left myself little space to deal with the opening section of *Mainland*, in which Mr. Seldes ticks off some twenty-five Americans who have written in disparagement of the American scene, and pays his respects sharply to the intellectual as such and to old Europe. With his central contention, which I may re-phrase by saying that life in America should be judged from the aspect of what the American gets out of it, and not by European yardsticks, I am — as any one must be — wholly in agreement. Nevertheless, it seems to me he has been finding quarrel greatly in a straw, and that his jibes are occasionally an abandonment of dignity. With the collateral argument, that Europe is to be despised, no man not in the heat of ugly anger can have anything to do. With many of his darts I am impatient because they have

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been dipped into the poison of heedless misrepresentation. For instance, it is not just to say that Europeans emigrated to this continent because Europe was a hopeless place, true though it be that these immigrants came here with hope in their hearts. The Revolution of 1789, those of the 1820's, that of 1848, were evidences of misery and injustice, but they were evidences also of nobility of spirit and energy and determination to obtain rights. It is in the highest degree unfair to say (p. 318) that Major Dreyfus "was condemned in the weakness of the Republic and released when the Government felt itself strong." One of the noblest pages of history is the story of the Dreyfus Affair, in which a whole nation practically entered into civil war in order to see justice done to a single man, and that man a Jew.

If Mr. Seldes will insist that America is different from Europe, let him at least agree that Europe should not be judged by the conditions of life in the Mississippi valley. As for the American intellectuals, doubtless there are fools among them, but in their own way they have been integrated into the American scene and are a meritorious part of it. They extol its lively arts; without them it would have been impossible to produce such a play as *Lysistrata;* they write the advertising copy and interspersed articles through which Condé Nast has changed the material surroundings of the middle-westerner; they work for America when they protest against the pioneer-farmer's lynchings of his fellow beings; and altogether life in America, particularly in this unadventurous century, would be saltless without them.

On the whole I wish that this book — which I have read with constant interest and which has stirred me to thinking about America as no other book has ever done, I believe — I wish that it had not been written. Mr.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Seldes is a democrat and a liberal, yet his building blocks are not those which will produce a democratic and liberal structure. The moment you cry out against the foreigner, the moment you set the average man against those who think and write, whatever the validity of their thought and their prose, you rouse the ugliest moral characteristics of nationalism and parochialism. Is it not enough that this country, which in the 1850's received the Hungarian revolutionist, Louis Kossuth, with cheers and a grant-in-aid from Congress, should have turned away from the port of New York, in the 1920's, Madame Kollantay, the Soviet Ambassadress to Mexico, who asked only to be allowed to proceed to her post by rail? Was not the 1850 America, fearless, sure of itself, more to Mr. Seldes's taste than the Red-baiting, timorous 1920 America? (Mr. Seldes's pages on communism could not be more reasonable, and I do not wish to imply that he is a Red-baiter. The tendency of his theses, I say, would create foreigner-baiting.)

Nor am I happy about his economics. I consider that the abusers of whom he complains were just as American as the abused. I deem it intellectual folly to ignore human greed and turpitude in order to stick stubbornly to the proposition that the fault lay with a "European" economic system, and to assert that there is such a thing as an "American" theoretical economics which could obviate exploitation of Americans by Americans.

If I guess correctly the sense of his economics, I do not believe that the American market can be enlarged so as to constitute a substitute for our external markets. I do not believe we can erect a non-monetary economy from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I do not believe there is a median way between capitalism and communism, and I believe that the only kind of capitalism in which we can

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLIC LIBRARY
NEWARK, OHIO

be free citizens is a liberal, international capitalism. I consider that in a system such as the German, or the Italian, capitalism is dead, for the capitalistic freedom of choice is dead. Capitalism, which Mr. Seldes defends, comports more liberty of action, more freedom to err both morally and materially, than he seems ready to allow for. I prefer these errors to those which are inseparable from the continued and wholesale injection of power-politics into economic affairs that would result from Mr. Seldes's economics, where we have now only the occasional and, so to say, retail interposition of politics in business. Mr. Seldes imagines that he is on firm ground between the marshes of communism and fascism. I believe him to be on narrow ground and in danger of waking up with one hip in the morass of fascism.*

But I don't know why I fret about this. A book that refers to Coughlin and Townsend in the present tense has already lost some of its strength. I should do better to venture the prediction that this will be the last book of its kind written till the business cycle takes its next turn downward — assuming that when it does, it will turn full one hundred and eighty degrees. America is again what she was before 1932 — a land hopeful of the future, heedless of the present, avid to put her signature to the installment-purchase contract. The Christmas sales and bonuses will be the biggest since 1929.

* Incidentally, it does not follow (as Mr. Seldes assumes) that Pareto was a fascist simply because he accepted a Senator's toga from Mussolini. One of his chief dislikes was "a State-worshipping mysticism and a morbid patriotism;" and just as Sorel, the Marxist apostle of violence, taught Mussolini much, so Pareto, the dry rationalist who exposed the part played in human activity by the non-rational, was honored by fascists who misunderstood him. I imagine that the irony of this tickled the last years of his life.

On the subject of philosophy, I find it sad that Mr. Seldes should reduce William James to a writer of books on how to succeed (p. 195), and should imply (p. 196) that an idealist in philosophy is necessarily a monopolist and an imperialist. Poor Locke, that spiritual father of the Fathers of our country!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Czars Fall on Hollywood

THORNTON DELEHANTY

IT HAS LONG BEEN an axiom in Hollywood that success succeeds like nothing else on earth. A "good" picture is one that brings in a profit at the box office, and a promising executive is one who has been associated with the making of a "good" picture.

If he manages to string along with several "good" pictures he becomes a nabob, a mogul or (by the grace of Time) a tycoon. His elevation from that point is a matter of temperament. Whether he remains a mere mogul or pushes on to czardom depends on his ability to view money as the symbol of power. The fact that Hollywood is so liberally sprinkled with czars would seem to indicate that power, or personal aggrandisement, is the objective of its leaders and that money is merely the bridgework.

This is not necessarily a conscious evolution. In my earlier and more exuberant days as a newspaper critic I once sought an interview with a promising young producer because my curiosity about him had been aroused by notices he had sent to the press announcing his association with a new producing company.

His plans, as they unfolded through his publicity representative, were exquisitely appetizing. In them I detected hard-boiled realism tempered by idealism, a blend which happened to fall in line with my own views on the cinema. Though firmly grounded in the money-making principles of the business, he was sufficiently the artist (or the philanthropist, if you like) to regard worthiness in stories and a generous treatment of actors and writers as an ideal. His announcement emphasized, for example, that he was going to engage the best writers and pay

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them on a royalty basis, allowing them to share in the profits of the picture, instead of the customary salary over a fixed period of time. This, he argued, would encourage them to give of their best, since good work would be proportionately rewarded. An excellent idea.

When I began to question him on these fascinating topics I found him curiously unresponsive, as if I were introducing something that bore only a remote relation to our meeting. I tried to pin him down to facts, but the schemes adumbrated in his publicity material, instead of crystallising, filled the room with an eerie vapor. Finally, in an attempt to capture his vision and bring it into focus I asked him what had caused him to abandon his former association and embark on this new enterprise, and he said "to make money."

Now, this isn't intended to be a funny anecdote. Money is a laudible objective, and the only two classes of people I can think of who don't want to make money are liars and saints. The point I am trying to make is that my promising young producer seized on an ordinary business transaction, i.e., his association with another producer, to build himself up as a personality. The money part of it was in the bag. He had got his terms and signed his contract. But he was out to make himself an individual power in the movie world, and the first step in that direction was to impress everyone, through the medium of an adroit publicity campaign (and with the coöperation of such gullible fellows as myself) with a uniqueness which might come in handy were he to quarrel with his new partner and go in for producing on his own. I can cite this supposition because, as it happened, he did quarrel with his partner and he is now a producer on his own.

I believe that Hollywood's dubious position in the civilised world stems directly from this lust for power, this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

power for power's sake which, if I were writing ten years ago, I would call the czar complex. Stories and legends of Hollywood have made us familiar with the characteristics of the movie producer, and even in their conceivable exaggerations we can find a parallel with the medieval monarch who, to retain his power, had to remain constantly on guard from enemies within and without.

Ask any Hollywood producer who his enemies are and he will say, "Anyone who is not for me is against me, including those who are for me." This is probably not wholly accurate as a number of producers have their sincere admirers, aside from relatives and those who are hired to admire. But the true movie czar is, paradoxically, modest; he refuses to believe he has any friends.

Instead, he surrounds himself with professional loyalists whose duties are to convince him that his wrong decisions are the right ones, and to taste his food and drink against the possible over-enthusiasm of his subordinates.

In technical perfection Hollywood turns out the best pictures in the world. It is characteristic of the czar that his armies must be the best drilled, the most perfectly equipped, the most glittering in appearance; for it is through his armies that he embellishes himself, overwhelms his enemies and aggrandises the power on which he necessarily feeds. Before other countries had wakened to the fact that there was a motion picture industry, Hollywood had swamped the world market with pictures which, for their slickness and mechanical finish, put them beyond competition. For a considerable period Hollywood was able to sit back and enjoy the fruits of its conquests. In America it catered to vast audiences whose appetites could be reliably appeased by any of the half-dozen plot formulas which constituted the Hollywood movie fare. In Europe, Asia, India, in China even,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Japan, the customers gained an intimate cross-view of American life and learned to recognise a custard pie comedy, a Western melodrama or a D. W. Griffith tear jerker through an ability to distinguish Buster Keaton from Bill Harte or Mary Pickford.

While the czars were gathering tribute from home and abroad they busied themselves by consolidating their realms, making offensive and defensive alliances, swapping their subjects around, intriguing among themselves, and otherwise engaging in practices customary among rulers who have become convinced that the world is their oyster. The control of the industry rested in a few hands, and it was secured not only by the overwhelming output of pictures but by the acquisition of theater chains, both in America and abroad, which made distribution a matter of mechanics and left the movie-goers, or peasants, no choice but to take what was given them and like it.

In the meantime certain European countries were beginning to show an independent spirit toward American films. Realising the potentialities of the cinema not only as money-making entertainment but as a new medium of artistic expression, they embarked on a production program which resulted in some surprises for Hollywood and the world in general. It was discovered that not all the actors, authors, technicians, directors and ideas reposed on the West Coast. Pictures imported from Russia, France and the UFA studios in Germany began to attract attention, and there was immediately formed in America an intelligentsia which devoted itself to discovering the significances of Emil Jannings, Fritz Lang, *S.S. Potemkin*, and the photographic didoes of Fernand Leger. Hollywood, of course, knew nothing about all this because the ravings were confined to the intelligentsia, but when the peasant class hauled money out of the sock to see a picture be-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cause Emil Jannings was in it, Hollywood began to take notice. Here was a threatened defection, and it looked serious. So instead of trying to find out why German pictures were attracting attention and making pictures to compete with them, they brought Jannings and Fritz Lang and Eric Pommer and Murnau to Hollywood where, under the czarist system, they were told how to make American pictures.

It didn't work. The German expatriates languished in California soil (the only things that ever did); one or two, like Murnau, made successful and good pictures, but the industry in Europe continued to make headway. The threat was growing into menace when the czars unwittingly warded off the challenge by hacking at each other's throats. Hollywood had discerned signs of unrest among the peasants; it was plain that the half or dozen plot formulas were beginning to lose their savor. The people were crying for different fare, whereupon one of the more inspired czars, having in mind the quick annihilation of his confreres, cried, "Let them eat sound," and the talking picture was born.

For a while after the populace had been forced to acquire a taste for sound pictures the European industry was all but dead. It struggled feebly but intermittently, and in the meanwhile American talkies swooped down on Europe and beguiled it by their novelty rather than their intelligibility, thus putting Europeans on an even basis with the Asiatics to whom the advent of sound was considerably less important than the sight of a new gown on Joan Crawford.

Hollywood's triumph was, again, a technical one. She had won, not by the arts of war, but by the mastery of the machine. And instead of profiting by her earlier mistakes, instead of experimenting with story ideas in the hope of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

attracting new audiences at home or of bothering to sense the qualities in pictures which might appeal to audiences abroad, she let everything ride while she occupied herself with internal rivalries and intrigues.

It was inevitable that as soon as the technique of sound photography had improved to the point of comparing favorably with the Hollywood product, Europe would commence to reassert herself. Russia and Germany were the pioneers in this revival, and Russian and German films began to make their appearance again on international screens. Hollywood definitely lost ground in foreign markets. Numerous factors were responsible for this, but before going into them let us glance at some of the changes which were taking place in the film capital.

The financial crash of 1929 brought about a radical alteration in the set-up and attitude of the picture industry. In the face of falling box office receipts, those companies which had meticulously acquired theaters throughout the country either went into bankruptcy or were forced to dispose of their properties as best they could. The independent exhibitor enjoyed a prestige he had not had since the beginning of the industry, and the break-up of theaters controlled by a few powerful producing companies left the road open for individuals to go into producing on their own.

This started a process of decentralisation and regrouping. Bright executives with ideas and financial backing could make alignments which heretofore were not open to them. By tieing up with a parent company they were assured of distribution facilities, so that actually they had little to worry about beyond making successful pictures. (This is not as ironical as it may sound. A shrewd producer, given the right director and stars, is apt to come off with a fair percentage of successful pictures.)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Theoretically this should have worked greatly toward an improvement in the type and quality of pictures, but it did not. There have been good pictures made by the independent producers but they have been no better, and in most cases not as good, as those made by the regular companies.

The betterment of pictures during the past four or five years can be attributed, I think, to other causes. Decentralisation has merely multiplied the number of czars without altering the fact that the primary urge is power. Such improvements as have occurred in the quality of Hollywood's pictures have coincided with crises which threatened to destroy the producers' power, or to curtail it, or transfer it to other hands. There has never been a spontaneous movement within the industry aiming toward a higher standard in acting, direction, or story material. The pressure has always come from without.

As indicated above, the pressure started abroad and then switched to home. Europeans and Asiatics were growing restless under the avalanche of penthouse frivolities which were shipped out from Hollywood. The flagrant vulgarity of these films, their selfconscious attempts at sophistication, their stereotype plots and interior decorator settings were amusing enough at first but they were somewhat lacking in those qualities which make for immortality. Likewise with the gangster pictures, the decay-in-the-tropics pictures, the backstage fantasies and the Cinderella idyls. If pictures so palpably slipshod in thought and meaning could attract fabulous wealth, why couldn't foreign countries cash in on it? That was what they asked, and they answered by setting up their own studios and building a wall against American films.

Even this slap in the face had no effect on the type of Hollywood films. It took a stronger hint to change the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tide; a growing disgust on the part of organised groups such as parents, women's clubs and the churches, which crystallised in the Legion of Decency's eloquent boycott. Heretofore there had been fist-shaking and threats of censorship, but Hollywood was paying Will Hays a good salary for just such contingencies. It used him to make a few pious gestures while it went on uninterruptedly with picture making.

The Legion of Decency's crusade, however, was tangible. It hit the producers in their pocketbooks and there followed a terrific upheaval in the scenario departments. Writers and editors began a search for something sweet, pure and lucrative. This time it was reform or sink. An ex-New York theatrical producer, a Harvard graduate and drama critic, is credited with saving the day by diving into his subconscious and coming up with *Little Women.*

This picture met with the approval of the women's clubs, parents' groups and the Legion of Decency. But what to Hollywood was vastly more important it was hailed by the movie-going public. Other producers saw in it the formula for their escape and soon the picture houses were flooded with tender romances enacted by dainty girls in dimity. The hard-boiled era was over; Hollywood began glorifying G-Men, instead of gangsters and lady drunks from Park avenue, and the war of the reformers was called off.

The second important change in the type of Hollywood pictures was the result of pressure from abroad. The process of alienation had been growing steadily, but apparently the American producers didn't see it, or, if they did, they underestimated its significance. Today there isn't an important country in Europe and the East which hasn't either taken steps to eliminate Hollywood competition or is so planning. The fiscal policy in Ger-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many has destroyed the market there; Mussolini has ruled that not more than twenty-five percent of the profits on any American film shown in Italy can be taken out of the country, and as a result no American pictures are shown. This decision on Mussolini's part followed his announced intention of building up an Italian film industry to rival Hollywood. The reports are that Austria is to join Germany in resisting American pictures; Russia already has a formidable movie business which she is steadily enlarging; France has quota restrictions on American films, and so has England.

A well known Hollywood director stopped off in Japan, China, India and Egypt on a recent trip around the world and in every country he reports a movement toward making domestic pictures. He found, among other things, that China has a fullfledged picture business and that Japan was eager to pay him fabulous sums if he would stay there and show them how to make films. India has turned to making her own pictures in retaliation for some of the Hollywood products which purported to represent life and customs in India.

Quota restrictions in England are an old story to Hollywood but the American producers were solaced by the comforting knowledge that the British movie-goers were being slowly harried to death by third-rate English pictures and were therefore disproportionately enthused over such American films as they were permitted to see. Then the English picture business suddenly took a turn for the better. England not only began to turn out films to challenge the better-grade American product but set up the machinery to distribute them in America.

There was a good deal of wild talk about a British invasion but Hollywood was no more than cynically amused until the British sent over their Big Bertha in the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

form of *The Private Life of Henry VIII* which exploded one peaceful morning in New York's Radio City Music Hall. Hollywood knew then that something had to be done.

The situation was alarming, and in order to cope with it Hollywood turned one of the cleverest tricks in her history. She started to make pictures of an essentially British appeal; pictures aimed to tickle the vanity of the English public; pictures like *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, *Cavalcade*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Under Two Flags* and the more recent *Charge of the Light Brigade* which lauded valor and extolled patriotism to such a point that they had the whole British Empire blushing furiously. When these pictures reached England the press bewailed the fact that none of their producers had thought to make them. No one suggested that Elstree or Denham retaliate by making patriotic American films. It is pretty much an accepted fact on both sides of the Atlantic that when Hollywood producers are pushed to extremes they can hold their own against all comers.

This is one of the disheartening things about the celluloid czars. When they put their skill and technical resources into the making of a picture there are none who can do better, but their best efforts consistently take place as evasions.

Hollywood is always side-stepping something or dodging somebody. The enormous energy it puts into its work is dissipated in mollifying outraged groups or conciliating others. Since a czar's power is precarious and his authority insecure he needs constantly to bolster it with illusions of grandeur. That, of course, is the answer to Hollywood's yes-men. It is the answer to most of Hollywood's defects, because the uneasy occupant of a throne lives in the constant fear that someone is going to take his power from him.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If I were asked to put my finger on Hollywood's chief trouble I would say it was this fear-growing-out-of-power. The potency of the cinema as a world influence has made it the target of special groups among which the czars are feinting and parrying in the hope that they will be left moderately free to keep on growing. That is why you so seldom see a picture with a provocative or controversial theme; ideas as such are unwelcome in the film industry lest some unguarded spark set off in the direction of religion, foreign relations, domestic politics, or social problems should invoke fire and brimstone from the gods and goddesses of the W.C.T.U., the Legion of Decency, the American Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Catholic Welfare Council or others who have made the movies an object of their affection.

Hollywood is thus left with a lot of perfectly good themes on its hands which it is afraid to touch. Yet I firmly believe that if the movie producers should develop a trend toward intelligence and sincerity they would clip the wings of the censors. For it is easier to defend an honest endeavor than to make excuses for vulgarity. And by "honest endeavor" I don't mean dullness or stupidity. In *The Informer* last year we had a shining example of courage and integrity meeting their reward — belatedly, it is true. But the effect was a substantial heightening of respect for the motion picture business. Hollywood can well afford to cultivate the interest and good will of intelligent people. The more friends she makes among this class the more protected she will be from her well-wishers.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Orchard Site

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

There's only one side of the house, northwest,
Where the apple trees will do the best.
Of course, an orchard needs the coldest part,
To keep warm spells from quickening up the heart
Of the apple trees to start buds going.
But there is more to this thing than the knowing
What is best for trees. There are the folks
Who wash the dishes up. Between the strokes
Of the dishcloth, they will like to think
Of more than greasy dishes in the sink.

Their windows look out north, and it will be
Good to have the orchard there, to see
The bare limbs printed by the winter moon
On the snow more sharply than by noon.
And when the nights recede, they will be able,
When they bring the dishes from the table,
To see their sunsets deepened by the lace
The apple branches spread across its face,
And later, see the moon make blossoms grow
Into something lovelier than snow.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Puerto Rico: Old Woman in a Shoe

ERIC M. MATSNER, M.D. AND WILLIAM LAIDLAW

ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH of July, 1898, the natives of Puerto Rico's Ponce, Guanica, and Arroyo districts thronged down to the shore to acclaim a joyous spectacle: the landing of General Nelson A. Miles, U.S.A., and a strong force of American troops, whose arrival meant that Spanish tyranny was ended. Reinforced by the *vivas* and *machetes* of the liberated, General Miles promptly dispatched four columns in the proper directions, and several days later, having routed the few forlorn Spaniards he could find, informed nearly a million people that they were now the fortunate wards of the United States, with all the prospects of health, wealth and wisdom which that guardianship implied.

It was a happy time all around. With the Spanish war triumphantly concluded, the United States made its first real appearance as a world power, and taking stock of itself breathed a deep, Kiplingesque sigh of satisfaction. The Puerto Ricans, still in that limbo of optimism where a victorious people loiters when it has just left one phase of its history and not quite begun another, envisioned a rosy destiny of their own. Everyone was pleased but Spain, and the mood lasted for five or six months. After that the United States and Puerto Rico settled into what was to be their actual relationship, a relationship which, in the thirty-eight years that have passed, has become more and more strained, and which today is perilously near the breaking point.

In the winter of 1936 Puerto Rico stands at the worst crisis of its entire history, one beside which the change of sovereignty in 1898 seems a matter of tame routine. Such

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

political explosions as the assassination some months ago of Colonel Francis Riggs, American chief of the insular police, and its chaotic aftermaths, are not the causes. Even the Tydings Independence Bill, with the fear and indignation it has roused among Puerto Ricans, is by no means a fundamental reason; nor, as is indicated by the picture of despair which Governor Theodore Roosevelt drew in 1929, is the world depression primarily responsible. These are merely late symptoms of a condition toward which the Island has been driving steadily since 1900 and with accelerated speed in the past decade. The cupidity of absentee owners, the bungling of the American government, the vagueness and the bungling of the Puerto Ricans themselves have all contributed; but a more vital element than any of these, and one which flows through every vein of Puerto Rico's troubled body, is the astounding, locust-like increase in the Island's population in the last thirty-five years.

Since the turn of the century the number of people in Puerto Rico, which cannot comfortably support more than about eight hundred thousand inhabitants, has doubled and is approaching two million. Whereas formerly the death rate exceeded the birth rate by thirty thousand, today the birth rate exceeds the death rate by forty thousand. By the simple laws of progression this means that a little more than one hundred years from now Puerto Rico, an island one hundred miles long by thirty-five to forty wide, will contain as many people as there are at present in the United States. This by itself is significant enough, but let us look briefly at the Island's economic framework.

Puerto Rico depends for its life chiefly upon four crops: sugar, which represents fifty percent of its export trade and from the cultivation of which seventy percent of its

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

income is derived, and minor crops of tobacco, coffee and citrus fruits. There is also a substantial needlework industry, cut fabrics being received from New York and handsewn by Puerto Rican women whose earnings comprise about sixteen percent of the Island's income. The sugar business, which is almost a monopoly enterprise, is completely dependent upon the American protective tariff. If the price of their sugar were not kept high, Cuba and Santo Domingo, with their superior soil and other advantages, would soon drive Puerto Rican producers from the market. It is said that even with the aid of this tariff neither the American nor Spanish sugar companies would be able to operate were it not for the pitiful wages which they pay their laborers. Fruit and Puerto Rico's excellent tobacco exist on a sounder basis but their volume is small. As for Puerto Rican coffee, often called the best in the world, it is literally too good to sell. The shade trees which must shield it as it develops take from five to seven years to grow, providing a hurricane does not interfere, and the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Puerto Rico estimates the yield per acre to be only one hundred pounds, which costs fifteen dollars to raise and nets about $8.50 in the New York market.

In these and all other commercial spheres absentee ownership must be reckoned with at every turn. Sugar is sixty percent absentee controlled, fruit thirty-one percent, tobacco eighty-five percent, banking sixty percent and steamship lines one hundred percent. Absentee ownership sucks profits away from the Island so quickly that the statistics showing Puerto Rico's favorable balance of trade have no meaning whatsoever, since there is really a steady loss. Ninety percent of the Island's earnings leave it as soon as they are made. As a last straw, the devastating hurricanes of 1928 and 1932, put a superfluous seal

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on Puerto Rico's inability to build up any reserve. Already, then, without going beneath the surface, we find a depleted and direfully dependent environment awaiting even the wealthier Puerto Rican children born today.

The dependence of the Island is augmented by the fact that it produces practically nothing of what it consumes. Only about one fourth of Puerto Rico's thirty-five hundred square miles is capable of cultivation, and apart from the impoverishment which time has brought to the soil, only about one twentieth of this total area is available for food crops. With a population concentration which, at present, shows five hundred inhabitants to the square mile — as compared with that of the agricultural state of Nebraska which has seventeen per square mile — the question of food supply is critical. There is little meat, green vegetables are scarce, and although Puerto Rico's eastern and western waters abound with edible fish, habit and a lack of refrigeration facilities lead the natives to import dried cod. The peon, who represents not only the largest percentage of the population but its most rapidly increasing part, subsists almost entirely on irregular snatches of beans and rice, a diet which is reflected in his appearance, his inability to resist disease and the whole miserable tenor of his existence.

Roughly, the Puerto Rican people, eighty percent of whom are on Federal Relief rolls at the present time, may be divided into three groups: an upper class of about ten percent, a middle class of some thirty percent, and the peons, who make up the remaining sixty percent of the inhabitants. The principal portion of the population is of Spanish blood, mixed, as the social scale becomes lower, with strong Negro strains in the coastal regions and with fainter streakings among the mountain peasants. The families of the first ten percent, frequently able to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trace their importance in the Island back to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, are apt to be intelligent, cultured, comfortably off, and in certain cases quite rich. Typical occupations of this class are sugar or tobacco raising, political careers, legal activities on behalf of the big corporations and other professional pursuits.

While a few of the aristocratic Puerto Ricans belong to the Liberal party, and though one or two of their sons may be stirred romantically by the small Nationalist faction, the political group which represents the top element is the Coalition, a union of the Socialists and the Republicans, the largest organization in the Island and the party of the vested interests. Any American who has been entertained by friends of this class in Puerto Rico will not be able to forget the hospitality he has found. Sipping a highball in a Condado garden or looking at the sea from one of the pleasant villas on the hills back of Ponce, one may hear a bitter denunciation of the Tydings Bill or some praise for the Spanish Rebels, but for the moment such things as *La Perla*, the worst slum district of San Juan, such sights as the distended bellies of the skinny, naked children one saw on the mountain roads, seem far away. The well-to-do Puerto Ricans do not encourage a discussion of these matters, and are often irritated by the visitor's strange concentration on them.

Repeatedly the writers were asked with annoyance if they, too, having been wined, dined and fêted generally in the most civilized manner imaginable, intended to carry back to the States the usual false picture of Puerto Rico as a sink of desolate savages, and if New York, also, did not have its poor. Naturally the sons of this top ten percent, most of whom have been educated at least briefly in the States and can expect the best futures Puerto Rico offers, suffer less from the Island's over-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crowding than others of their generation, but even they are beginning to feel the pinch. For one thing, the wiping out by various factors of many of the old Puerto Rican agricultural holdings is sending more and more of them into the already cramped professional fields.

Much the same can be said of the upper part of the thirty percent middle class, which ranges from types not far below those just mentioned to the small farmer only a peg above the peon. Even more than the young men of the upper class, middle class boys are flooding the streams of professional life. Commercial chances for them become fewer almost daily. Compared to the agricultural section of the class, however, these young men have smooth sailing. The small tenant farmer, who supplies forty percent of the cane, is so dependent upon the big sugar companies, to whose *centrales* he must take his product for grinding, that he never knows what his position will be until they tell him. Nor do they often tell him directly. Either because of a certain last minute delicacy, or because they realize that a Puerto Rican subcontractor will do a better job of it, the *centrales* make their arrangements with some larger farmer, who obtains the whole amount for them by methods which usually put even those of the needlework subcontractors to shame. The independence-minded Liberal party, although it calls itself the representative of the masses and thunders at the Coalition for exploiting them, is really the political voice of these professional, white-collar and small property owning people. When in power it has been as subservient to the corporations as its rivals. Actually, the masses are represented by no one.

The middle class, through its university boys, has also furnished Pedro Albizu-Campos with most of his followers. This little Nationalist party, which has never numbered more than five thousand at the polls, was of no im-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

portance until its fanatical preachments of hatred and violence resulted in the murder of Colonel Riggs, whose close friend Senator Millard Tydings, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Insular Affairs, thereupon unleashed his much discussed Independence Bill. The Tydings Independence Bill, called "vicious, heartbreaking and ridiculous" by Puerto Ricans and many Americans, and spoken of as "realistic" by other Americans who hail its "put up or shut up" attitude, has caused more uproar in the Island than any other event but one. If the people decide in a coming referendum, to be independent, it provides complete autonomy for them within the short space of four years, although its defenders, asserting that the administration is sincere in its proposal to let the Puerto Ricans determine their own future, say this time limit may be modified.

The other thing which has stirred up great bitterness is the fact that the two Nationalist boys who killed Riggs, having been arrested on the spot, were later shot to death in the police station. Since then, and especially since the sentencing of Albizu to six years in Atlanta for seditious activities and murder, the Nationalist party has become troublesome — futile but unpredictable — and has received comfort from a clique of the Liberals. Nevertheless the *Nationalistas* have nothing to do with any serious plan for independence in the Island — if there *is* any genuinely serious plan. Despite their black shirts the dreams of Albizu's boy-rabble are neither fascistic nor red, but Irish, and the whole movement is largely the outcome of a powerful ego's personal frustration. Albizu-Campos, a brilliant mulatto and a graduate of both Harvard College and Harvard Law School, which he once represented in a debate against Oxford and Cambridge, found his expected career balked in the States by the tragic

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

barrier of his color and in Puerto Rico by a bland wall of political lawyers. His compensation was his rabid Nationalist party, whose program called for the terrorizing of the "usurping imperialistic invader" by the systematic slaughter of American officials, and a secret but heroic wresting of Puerto Rico's independence by force. That this should have culminated in the death of Riggs, a cultured and sympathetic friend of the Puerto Rican people, and, ironically, among the Americans whom they liked and admired most, is doubly sad; for Riggs was perhaps Albizu's closest American acquaintance and in accord with ideals of Puerto Rican independence. Frequently, if only hypothetically, Albizu had discussed his plans with him, though never, probably, that one of his designs which was to concern the Colonel so personally.

In Puerto Rico, we were told that others, including the Governor, were slated for death that Sunday morning, and that only the last minute failure of the chosen assassins — whose "suicides" are said to have occurred in consequence — prevented the full carrying out of the plot. Since violent factions have never before been part of Puerto Rico's life, and organized murder appears now for the first time, it is not too much to say that here, too, overcrowding, bringing aimlessness, thwarted hopes and enforced idleness to youth, has helped an individual's psychoses to pave the way.

It is only when we come to the third and lowest class, however, the miserable peon, that we can realize the full, ghastly meaning of the steady increase in the Island's population. The foulness of the Puerto Rican peon's existence can hardly be described. He lives literally in a state of chronic starvation, crowding his filthy, scarecrow body into a hut where his female counterpart and their numberless wretched children almost always share at

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

least one of his diseases. Beyond these — his sad body, his hut propped up on its wavering sticks and his unhappy family — he has nothing of his own, seldom even a bit of earth on which to grow things; and when he has the earth he does not know how to use it. How he manages to live at all is a mystery which sometimes baffles the Puerto Ricans themselves, but they will point out to you defiantly that he does live. If he exists in one of the towns, say in *La Perla* in San Juan, he may manage to keep breath in him by rare odd jobs, by begging, by nobody knows what. If he is a mountain *jibaro* or a native of the sugar plains he will probably find occasional work and can always, at least, steal into a field for a handful of beans or rice or a chance vegetable. Even the luckier peons who are more or less sure of jobs on the sugar plantations can only expect short terms of employment. The "dead" season, during which the cane grows, awaiting cutting, and when the required laborers are very few, leaves them totally idle for more than six months of the year. Any peon who averages an annual income of one hundred dollars for himself and his family has done well. This is probably what an intelligent and wealthy young citizen of Ponce meant when he told us calmly that Puerto Rico had never really been struck by the world unemployment problem. In the sense that a blind man is not troubled by the glare of the sun, he was undoubtedly correct.

It is the peon who is reproducing himself most wildly; whose rotting fungus life is bursting out of the island more swiftly than that of any other class. Students of the hot countries, and particularly the British, who have a grim way of leaving the death rate alone in these places, are well acquainted with the fact that tropical people always breed up to the limit of subsistence, and it is only natural that the more primitive the individual, the more promis-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cuous his sexual habits will be. The United States, having provided just enough minor health improvement to insure more births than deaths, has unwittingly encouraged the survival of the unfittest to an extent scarcely equaled in the entire civilized world. Hungry and indifferent, ill and ignorant, the peon wanders about begetting himself — in the cane fields, in a mountain thicket, wherever he happens to be. Illegitimacy has long been recognized as one of Puerto Rico's worst problems, but it is startling to read in a report prepared by Dr. C. P. Armstrong, Dr. E. M. Achilles, and Mr. M. J. Sacks for the New York State Chamber of Commerce's Special Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, that in 1920 one-third of all the marriages in Puerto Rico "were illegal or so-called consensual, making for loose home ties and the easy and frequent abandonment of children, of whom there are many thousands in the Island."

The peon brings these offspring not only into a fixed economic environment, where their opportunities will be precisely what his have been, but almost surely into the clutches of such diseases as malaria, filaria, syphilis, hookworm or tuberculosis, to say nothing of malnutrition which they can count on definitely. The death rate from tuberculosis alone in 1934 was 308.3 per one hundred thousand population, the number of deaths being 5,082. Maternal and infant mortality, because of the fact that deliveries are attended by unqualified midwives, who also manage the enormous number of abortions, are unbelievably high. The infant mortality rate for 1934 was 113 (7,442 infant deaths), the lowest ever recorded in the Island. The maternal mortality rate was 53.3 for each ten thousand total births, not including mortality from abortion, for which no records are available. There were also 4,782 still births, a rate 67.9 per thousand births,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

largely due to syphilis. The dead, however, do not leave gaps. Coming on one of the perpetual peon funeral processions, the barefoot males of the family trudging behind the father, who carries the tiny, flower-decked coffin stolidly on his head, one can be sure that three or four other lives will spring up to take the little body's place. And meanwhile, naked in the dirt at home, with an apathy which would be dreadful to see in the faces of old men, still other small beings, with crooked little sternums, emaciated limbs and bloated stomachs, sit waiting for the time when they too will beget themselves.

If the reader is callous enough to comfort himself with the reflection that these things are remote from his own person, the aforementioned Chamber of Commerce report will show him that they are not. The Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States (they were made so *en masse* by the Jones Act in 1917) and as such they come to the mainland whenever they choose. The Chamber of Commerce report concerns itself chiefly with the tests made with Puerto Rican children in New York public schools, the object being to see how they compare in various respects with young American pupils. The investigators established to a horrifying degree that these children are not only far inferior to all other groups in their ability to absorb the three R's, but huge contributors to the health difficulties of such a sore spot as Harlem, where tuberculosis, for instance, is so common; that they are actually incapable, morally and physically, of adjusting themselves even to the lowest standards of civilization known in the city. It does not take a sociologist to see the effect of a continued influx of lower class Puerto Ricans on the unemployment, the crime and the disease problems of a community like New York, whose Puerto Rican population is now exceeded only by that of San

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Juan itself. In other words New York is already the second largest Puerto Rican city in the world and may soon become the largest; in which case it will be a Puerto Rican city containing all the Island's bad elements and none of its good ones.

It is plain, then, that the United States, if only from selfish motives, must not only do something about the Island's predicament but do it immediately; and since the exact nature of the "something" is very clear, one may well ask why it has not been done long ago, why it is not being done at this moment. Obviously the two solutions which automatically suggest themselves are, first, a well coördinated, far-reaching program of birth control, and, second, some plan for permanent economic rehabilitation which can be carried out by the masses of the people themselves. That Puerto Ricans and responsible Americans in the Island agree with these points is shown by the preamble of the Chardon Report, submitted by Carlos Chardon, former Chancellor of the University and Regional Director of the PRRA, which states that "a policy of fundamental reconstruction should, therefore, contemplate a definite reduction of unemployment to a point, at least, where it may be adequately dealt with by normal relief agencies; the achievement of this, largely by restoration of land to the people that cultivate it, and by the fullest development of the industrial possibilities of the Island. These achievements will be unavailing, however, if the population growth cannot be checked, or at least, reduced."

With an administration in Washington which is probably the first that has not regarded Puerto Rico's distress with complacency (President Coolidge, for example, once shocked the Puerto Ricans by saying that no promise made to them by the United States had ever been left

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unfulfilled, and Herbert Hoover, during his Presidential visit to the Island, expressed himself as satisfied with conditions) with this advantage and the realization of the necessary remedies which the Chardon Report suggests, one would expect positive and potent action along the two lines mentioned. Sad to say, neither of the Island's bitter requirements is receiving even the echo of an answer. As for economic rehabilitation, the long awaited rescue ship, with PRRA painted proudly on its bows, had no sooner been launched than it lost its rudder, and so far has not reached the needy people for whom it was destined. The other, and by far the greater want, a program of public health which would radically reduce the Island's population and make economic recovery at least possible, actually began, for a time, to be cared for, and then the successful and desperately needed maternal health centers were abandoned — the victims of "political realism" in an election year.

This was unfortunate, not only for Puerto Rico but for all concerned; for the change which was intimated even in the brief period during which the maternal health centers lasted is enough to show that their destruction was one of the ugliest social sins of our generation. While the system of contraceptive centers set up with Federal funds had its support taken away before sufficient time had elapsed for an accurate follow-up investigation, the work of these centers, so long as they existed, was blessed from one end of the Island to the other. Eight months ago when PRERA assistance was withdrawn (until even that near to the first Tuesday after the first Monday the politicians, knowing the need of the clinics, had winked at them) this work came to a virtual standstill. Unwilling to face the consequences, even the consequences of delay in dealing with Puerto Rico's fundamental menace, the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Island's two schismatic medical groups came together under the presidency of Dr. J. H. Font and determined, as a united force, to carry out a maternal health program of their own. In September, quietly supplied with money by the PRRA, they proceeded to do so. Under the leadership of Dr. José Belaval, who had the active coöperation of Dr. Garrido-Morales, Puerto Rico's able Commissioner of Health, two model clinics were established in San Juan, each staffed with a physician, a nurse and a trained social worker and conducted in the manner of a New York settlement house center. Almost at once nine more sprang up and plans were laid for sixty-one additional centers to be placed strategically throughout the Island. Within a few days the number of functioning clinics had leapt to sixteen. Then, the pressure on Washington becoming suddenly explicit, the aid of the United States government was withdrawn, and despite Puerto Rican resentment the clinics were shut down.

THE second need, some sort of workable economic program for the people, likewise remains unanswered, although in this case, lay platitudes not being so terrifying as threats of holy vengeance, the Administration has at least had the courage to stick to its guns. Irrelevant planning and that inconsistency for which there is much precedent in the Island have been more than obstacles. Many years ago, in 1902, in fact, the United States, foreseeing carpet bag exploitation in Puerto Rico, passed the "five-hundred acre law," specifying that no one corporation engaged in agriculture may own more than five hundred acres, nor circumvent the law by having a subsidiary own more than five hundred acres. This law, created solely for the benefit of Puerto Rico, has never received the support of a Puerto Rican legislature,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

largely because of the opposition of reactionary members of that body. The effect of the five-hundred acre law, if enforced, would be to bring about a condition similar to that in the British West Indies, where at the insistence of the British government land is broken into small parcels, with the result that the people have achieved comparative economic independence. Not the least of Puerto Rico's misery, including the heartless exploitation of the small tenant farmer and farm laborer, is traceable to the acquisition of land contrary to the declared policy of Congress.

Again, in 1928, following the ruinous hurricane, the United States voted five million dollars for the relief of the stricken farmers. It is estimated that not more than eight hundred thousand of this sum went for relief, the balance going to pay off old debts or into the pockets of the appraisers, invariably businessmen, lawyers or bankers of the towns in the damaged areas. In certain cases, according to the calculators, falsely high appraisals were exchanged for bonuses. One of the results of this was to load small farmers with such heavy mortgages that when the Federal Land Bank and other government agencies later undertook to refinance them they found liens on the properties much higher than their actual values and were unable to buy the land for rehabilitation purposes.

In 1933, therefore, when enormous sums of FERA money poured into the Island, where the organization was the Puerto Rico Emergency Relief Administration, the general grab for control of the funds, reaching its height in the Coalition's bald attempt in 1934, surprised no one. Mrs. Dorothy Bourne, Associate Professor at the University of Puerto Rico, at that time the only professionally trained and experienced social worker available, arranged with Governor Gore to devote her full

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEWARK, OHIO

time to the PRERA's work without compensation, and her husband, James R. Bourne was appointed Administrator. The PRERA then proceeded to achieve the highest administrative expense incurred by any relief administration organization set up by the Federal Government; and little else.

In 1934, frightened by the situation, the Island legislature created the Puerto Rico Policy Commission, with Chancellor Chardon as Chairman. The Chardon Report, recommending the establishment of a public corporation modeled after the Virgin Islands company, which would endeavor to rehabilitate Puerto Rico with the assistance of United States funds, found a financial backer in the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, set up by President Roosevelt in September, 1934, with Dr. Ernest Gruening, Director of the Division of Territories and Island Possessions, as Administrator. Dr. Gruening, a student of Latin-American affairs, general advisor to the United States delegation at the last Pan-American conference in 1933, and an honest liberal, started off with an amiable faith in the ability of the Puerto Ricans to wield as much authority as he could place in their own hands, but it is doubtful if he still has this today. The PRRA's goal, however, whatever detours it may have made in trying to reach it, is so excellent that one hopes it will ultimately find the right road. The program is largely one of resettlement to endeavor to effect a more equitable adjustment in the ownership and cultivation of the extremely limited amounts of arable land which now exists in Puerto Rico. It includes homesteading, slum clearance and housing, rural electrification, coöperatives of various kinds and public buildings.

But the fact is that all this money might as well be poured into the ocean as long as the present birth rate is

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

maintained and forty or fifty thousand sickly children destined only for support by the public purse are being brought into the world each year. Eventually, when this last, and at present insurmountable, evil has been rectified, it may be that those responsible for Puerto Rico's life will find it necessary to strengthen all the points of the PRRA's present program by the application of such a plan as that which Alfred Baruch offers in his articles in the New York *Post* of May 18, 19, and 20, 1936. The aim of these articles was to show how Puerto Rico might be prepared for independence, not, as Senator Tydings provides, after four years, but after twenty-five at least. Mr. Baruch, who was formerly consulting industrial engineer to the PRRA and who combines a clear social vision with a technician's knowledge of what may or may not be done in the Island, has gone into detail in his discussion, and shows definitely how Puerto Rico, under the proper conditions, could hope to face the future.

There can be no conditions for any economic program at all in Puerto Rico, however, until a public health program has been inaugurated which makes maternal health, birth control in all its aspects, its main aim. In Puerto Rico, as we have seen, such a health program *is* an economic measure in the most accurate sense of the word. If population control is recognized as a factor vital to the well-being of the United States itself, it is obviously far more important, indeed of paramount importance, to a tiny, finite area without any industrial life and with agricultural resources which are solely limited. Bluntly, the millions of dollars which have been dumped into the Island for health purposes, to stem tuberculosis, syphilis and the other diseases which are rampant, have up to now been utterly wasted, since, in view of the circumstances, the stricken have multiplied at a rate which has

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLIC LIBRARY
NEWARK, OHIO

made facilities for caring for them a drop in the bucket.

The most urgent health maneuver for the Island to execute now is the immediate re-opening of those closed clinics. Not only must they be re-opened, but they must be augmented on a scale hitherto only talked about. If the interest of Puerto Rican and American political leaders can be kept above the level of lip service — a formidable qualification — it is still not too late to begin all over again. The physicians who direct these centers must be amply supplied with funds and constantly encouraged to expand the number of them. They must also be allowed a decent length of time in which to test the efficacy of various techniques as applied to women of the very lowest intellectual and social strata. Their findings in this respect should benefit not only Puerto Rico but, subsequently, many other parts of the world where human life is cheap, including our own South. Unless these things are done, swiftly and successfully, nothing can save Puerto Rico. It will be strangled by its own flesh and blood.

Meanwhile, even as this is being written, the peon is breeding; and the problem is still there. It is a problem which is permanent. No matter what political and economic destiny is eventually in store for the Island, its first need, its eternal need will continue to be the healthy regulation of its population. Whether it remains an American possession or finally achieves independence, whether Puerto Rico is one day to enjoy a dominion status similar to Canada's or whether it becomes a State (which, considering its Spanish culture, its separation from the mainland and its reliance on the customs and duties refunded by the United States, is not likely) this problem is Puerto Rico's Frankenstein monster, dwarfing all others. Not only academically but in a bitterly realistic sense, it is also a problem of the American people.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

George Bellows, Athlete

EDWARD M. BARROWS

THE Ohio State-Indiana indoor meet had just been run off. What the Hoosiers had left of the O.S.U. team was gathered dispiritedly in the locker room, for the result had been one of those moral victories — the home team having won all the third and fourth places in true never-say-die fashion while Indiana rather nonchalantly took all the firsts and seconds.

The sodden silence was broken by a stranger — an orphan black cat beneath a bench. It was scrawny and sad eyed. One ear was gone and its body ran to ribs. Its wails proclaimed its desire for a home and a better life.

"Ah! The mascot," announced an embittered distance man, holding up the beast by the scruff of its neck.

Ho Bellows took the cat in his arms and tried to sooth it. "Indiana didn't see it," he reflected, "or they'd chewed off the other ear." Which remark won for that cat the courtesies of the locker room for the season, as the holder of the only point the Hoosiers had failed to garner during the meet.

George Bellows was not a track man, though he frequently worked out with us for the fun of the thing. Thinking it over at this distance, it seems to be about the only phase of undergraduate life, football excepted, in which his lanky form and deep ringing laugh were not ubiquitous. Bellows did not exactly attend Ohio State; he infested it. Baseball, basketball, tennis, glee club, minstrel club, Makio (college annual) board, fraternities, stormy petrel of campus affairs in general. An incessant cartoonist of such irreverent cleverness that the storms he raised in outraged faculty breasts always

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dissolved in laughter . . . though he once cartooned his venerable Dean with the characteristic breach between trousers and vest closed by a padlock.

This cartoonist also was Ohio's greatest shortstop. Nothing got past him that was under ten feet high or within twenty feet range. He could reach like a giraffe and jump like a kangaroo. He had the professional's trick of scooping up a bullet-like grounder and shooting it to first with an underhand flirt of the wrist all in one sinuous, graceful movement, without straightening up or setting himself for the throw. Off the diamond or the basketball floor he was ungainly and awkward, puzzled what to do with his long arms and six feet two of height. In baseball all this was changed. Sure-footed and swift, he drifted and bounded about the infield with the indescribable grace of an acrobat.

There were two prophecies about Ho Bellows. He was one of America's coming cartoonists, or else a Big League shortstop. No one could foresee that he would combine the best features of both by showing how a prizefight looked when a real artist painted the truth about it.

My own acquaintance with George Bellows antedated his college days somewhat. In Will Irwin's deft wording, I had graduated by request from Ohio State, and as a reporter was covering the baseball games of a semi-bankrupt team that then was the best Columbus could show in the world of sports. The home team was getting some publicity, not so much from its victories as from some unique thumbnail cartoons of a rangy youngster named George Bellows of the Ohio State Journal. Beneath the hot suns of a central Ohio summer, Bellows and I shared the press stand of the baseball park. Bellows turned out to be a vocal encyclopedia of the national game. Once he kibitzed the locals into a winning streak

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that lasted half an inning. It was the fourth inning and a rare victory seemed in sight when three deputy sheriffs eased themselves out of the grandstand and attached the entire Columbus paraphernalia for debt — bats, masks, water bucket, spare gloves, everything except the nine tobacco cuds conceded as personal property. The game came to a dazed halt. The grandstand razzed and threw pop bottles. Players gathered in a knot and started a fiery argument over the right to use the visitor's bats.

Then Bellows jumped up with an Indian yell and waved a pole-like arm toward a pile of broken fence-boards beside the grandstand. The batter-up gravely selected a piece of plank and took his stance at the home plate waiting for the umpire to call time while the grandstand turned from jeers to cheers. Then the opposing players sullenly gave in. The batter returned to take his choice of the visitor's bats and the game went ahead.

Bellows expounded. "We were ahead, you see. If we could keep it going another inning it would be a completed game under the rules. When they saw we could bluff out our half-inning with boards for bats, they figured they might as well let the fans have their money's worth. I was pretty sure they would."

Between gurgles of pop bottles on succeeding afternoons, Bellows enlarged on his theories of baseball, cartooning, editors and artists, together with many opinions vital to budding newspapermen if not to their chiefs. He was never still; always wriggling, shouting comments and whimsical advice to the diamond — he seemed to know most of the Columbus team personally — and was always drawing interminable sketches of players in outlandish attitudes. He had been a fan since he could remember, he said. Even in grammar school days he had organized a baseball team that was the pride and terror of the Colum-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bus East Side. His other interest in life was pictures. He had been drawing them ever since he was a kid, and he proposed to keep on drawing them till he died.

Bellows entered college that fall. Nevertheless, he kept a part time connection with the Journal, doing advertising illustrations and art room hack work under the eye of Harry Westerman, whose fame as a midwestern cartoonist was just then beginning to spread. Westerman and I had a habit of lunching together after midnight, when the early edition had closed. Sometimes his lanky young assistant joined us, and drawled out queer comments that were apt to be way off the subject. Generally though, Bellows bustled into the office late, and hustled out early, to his chief's disgust.

"I hate to see a promising boy waste his chances that way," Westerman complained. "He'd have the makings of a good cartoonist in him if he'd quit faking his stuff with a pantagraph. But no, he comes flying in at the last minute, grabs a magazine ad, traces it off and rushes out for fear he'll find more work to do. Sure, he's only drawing ads, but he could learn something from 'em if he wasn't so bent on getting out!"

But the understudy had other ideas. He joyfully seized every chance of caricaturing public figures, but he wasted little time and no interest in the drudgery of borders and advertising routine. We worked together on conventions and political assignments at intervals, and his pictures probably saved my readers many dull moments, besides silencing Westerman for the time. Westerman, Bellows and I were semi-pros in a vested Episcopal choir that winter, and the two of them would persuade the organist to play ragtime in full diapason at choir practice, until the outraged rector heard of it. Nothing came of this devotional lapse however, for we were still lusty-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

throated choristers when one Sunday night I went from Vespers to the Journal office, thence an hour later to a job on a Chicago sheet. I never would have seen either of them again, probably, if in Duluth three years later I had not suddenly turned homesick for the State campus again, and returned to make my peace with its pedagogic gods.

After those years of nomadic wandering it was good to be back on the campus again. But my own college generation had passed and only the buildings seemed familiar, so it was in a lonely and rather patriarchal mood that I wandered out to the athletic field, one spring afternoon, where a ball game — I believe with Illinois — was in full swing.

The game was close and the crowd was excited. State was at bat with the bases filled but the tension was broken by general laughter at the antics of the Ohio man who was coaching runners off first. He was rangy and thin, and he brandished an old broom which combined with his own length gave him a reach of almost twelve feet. He was jumping up and down and yelling like an Indian while he waved his broom and shouted offending remarks, pointed at the runner but intended to reach the pitcher. The pitcher was flustered — disastrously so, for the next ball caught him in the pit of the stomach, where it is against the rules for a baseball to be. The batter lay down on the ground and hunted for his breath, with a knot of his teammates helping in the search. The umpire ordered a substitute.

"Put the broom man on!" challenged the Illinois infield in a chorus. George Bellows dropped his broom, landed on first base in two defiant jumps without a letdown in his arm-waving patter. Of course it would be a pleasure to record, Merriwell fashion, that Bellows broke

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up the game by stealing home with the bases full. Instead the side was retired on a double play, and another Buckeye afternoon was ruined.

After the game, I made my way through the crowd to Bellows. "Howthehell did you get here?" he asked. "Harry Westerman told me you were in Minnesota."

"So you're still doing time on the Journal, huh?" I countered.

"Naw. No time. I was asking Harry Westerman at church."

"Time?" I puzzled. "Thought you wanted all that drawing thing you could get. Harry said he was going to make a cartoonist out of you."

"How? By drawing shoes for the Union Clothing Company. Nix, I want action. Anyway, when I get through here I'm going to paint. Tough game to lose, wasn't it?"

We talked baseball for the rest of that encounter and it was many years before we mentioned pictures again. But the year that immediately followed gave me many opportunities to observe George Bellows and the unconscious development of the qualities that were soon to bring him world fame. Of course there was no such obvious examination as this pedagogic statement would suggest. Only later could I study from his pictures the significance of what, as a student, I had seen. We met casually on the campus, in the minstrel club and in the gymnasium. He was an energetic fan for every kind of sport, *except prize fights*. Either in college or in newspaper work, I cannot recall boxing so much as mentioned by him.

Bellows' prize-fighters have been praised by medical wiseacres for the accuracy of their muscular portrayal. Accurate these figures were bound to be, for Bellows put in a large percentage of his time studying anatomy in his college days. This, with a fair amount of English and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

literature made the classroom background for his future career that he went to Ohio State to obtain. The University in those days could give him little of art that was not third hand, and for this training he bided his time. The cartoons, college calendars and the like which evoked so much undergraduate enthusiasm and professorial annoyance were merely ebullient outbursts of carelessly high spirits, that Bellows is said to have been nearly as annoyed with on his few returns as an alumnus, as were the reverend seigneurs he drew them to torment.

Of George Bellows in the role so endearing to the movie portrayers of college life — the social hero and the gallant squire of co-eds — I cannot qualify as a witness, being one of those mavericks of campus life, prone to watching the kaleidoscope of a coeducational university without much desire to get into the whirl myself. But as I remember him, George Bellows moved through the rest of college life on the impulse of a reckless originality in views and expression, and a completely irreverent attitude toward the dignity of tradition or precedent. In the vestry room of St. Paul's, I have seen him, while waiting for the Processional, move forward, covertly raise the sacerdotal skirts of his black and white vestments, and dance a double shuffle to the tune of *Mother dear, Jerusalem* floating in from the deep-toned organ outside. The rector missed that one.

A recurrence of my chronic disease, wanderlust, sent me to end my collegiate days at Wisconsin. At the same time George Bellows as abruptly dropped his university course in mid air. Twenty years passed before we saw each other again. He went straight to New York, carrying his irrepressible interest in pictures and athletics, plus a cargo of literary and anatomical facts acquired at college. His transplantation from Columbus and college

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLIC LIBRARY
NEWARK, OHIO

cartoons was complete. Days and nights he wandered the streets of the city then, midway between the old New York of Richard Harding Davis and O. Henry, and the present day creation of superskyscrapers and supersalesmanship. Out of these wanderings he created a New York as unique to artists as was O. Henry's to literature.

Devoted to painting, he was still the athlete. When funds were low he played baseball and basketball on the semi-pro teams in the New York suburbs. He came to see something of New York professional sports from the inside, knew many of its picturesque characters and became more than an occasional patron of Sharkey's Stag Club, then a center for professional boxing and wrestling. As an art student he put himself under the guidance of Robert Henri, a rebel from orthodoxy who had just forsaken Paris for New York.

George Bellows' career as an art student, however, was of the briefest. It is unique, in that the customary training in Europe, under the European influence, was completely lacking. His work reflects pure Americanism, and his early letters show his consuming desire to interpret America truthfully as an American saw it. Yet he was always planning to go abroad "next year" for study, but the forces that his own impetuous spirit put in motion constantly prevented him. Within two years after arriving in New York he had set up his own studio and had given an exhibition of his own paintings. In another year his first painting was exhibited by the National Academy of Design. *Forty-Two Kids*, it was called — a Manhattan waterfront with a gang of nude small boys diving off a float — a scene common enough to the dwellers along the docks, but strange as Ethiopia to the academicians, for no artist had ever presented this scene in all its brusque naturalness before.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There followed a succession of pictures of the life New York's six millions have always known, but which have been supplanted in this country by pictures of street life in Paris and scenes along the banks of the Seine. They dealt with subjects that in scope and treatment were far removed from the European tradition — which was natural enough in view of his background — but which caused some shaking of academic heads. Nevertheless in 1909 George Bellows was made a member of the Academy, the youngest artist then to attain that distinction.

This was high recognition among his fellow craftsmen, though it meant no more to the lay world, perhaps, than would the bestowal of a fellowship in the Ethnological Society of Latvia. But a new creation of this self-starting young academician brought masses and masters face to face in the startling discovery of a common interest in Art. This was a crayon, *The Knockout*, now in a private collection in California. Drawn first of all as a physical expression of triumph and tragedy combined, a sort of muscular melodrama in fact, the picture won instant recognition for its accurate portrait of the climax of a prize fight. Then came the epochal *Stag at Sharkey's* — two prize-fighters in elemental struggle in the ring, while dimly outside the spotlight's glare loomed a vague circle of the brutish, vapid, inanely terrible faces with which Bellows always liked encircling his prize-fighters. The picture, now hanging in the Municipal art collection of Cleveland, had a hard time to secure recognition at first. It was too brutal as art and too artistic as brutality to fit into any known category of acceptance. To his amazement and amusement, for after all he had no more than painted a picture that interested him intensely, Bellows found himself accepted by the public not as a painter but as a pugilistic expert. But the picture

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

soon won a place in its own right. *Club Night* and *Both Members of This Club* followed. They became the predecessors of a whole gallery of paintings and lithographs and prize-fighters in action, which increased with the growing years. They earned him high professional recognition, and a comfortable financial security. He was urged to invest the latter in industrials. "Not for mine," said Bellows. "I don't know stocks, but I know pictures." Accordingly he put his surplus, then and thenceforward into the work of artists for whom his expert knowledge forecast a future.

How did Bellows discover such a treasure-trove? There is no indication anywhere in his career that he ever had as much interest in prize fighting as in any other sport. The satirical contrast between the elemental, savage directness of those naked figures struggling in the ring, and the flatulent faces of the civilizees leering through the darkness outside the ropes, makes the artist's scorn for the blood-lusting fight fan and all that he stood for too evident to let us suppose he shared their feelings. The earlier fight pictures brought him considerable criticism for their brutality, and suggestions that he deliberately emphasized this for publicity's sweet sake, with one eye on the wealthy sporting clientele.

Again the pictures themselves would dispose of this idea. His theme is not fighting, but the human torso in the highest intensity of action. He painted a picture of the Dempsey-Firpo fight. In that hectic melee, Firpo first knocked Dempsey clear over the ropes, and then Dempsey climbed back and obliterated Firpo. Now Dempsey was the heavyweight champion of the world, and a spectacular spender. Bellows, if he had so chosen, could have immortalized Dempsey's final savage triumph. Instead he chose the moment when the Wild Bull

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Pampas was standing Dempsey on his head in mid air. Very poor merchandising, if the artist was trying to "sell himself" to the American sporting public. We must look a good deal further for the genesis of Bellows' fight pictures.

We find it in the man himself. He loved athletics and understood the meaning of the word; he admired physical perfection; he was for direct action in all things, and hated sham; he was under a religious conviction that the destiny of the artist is to paint truly, hence he was impatient of the conventional poses people always associate with Art. He was without association with, or interest in, the accepted canons of conventional art abroad. The ethics of prize fighting did not interest him any more than its implications of sadism. A letter to a Columbus friend who raised the issue is revealing: "I am not interested in the morality of prize fighting. Let me say that the atmosphere around the fighting is a lot more immoral than the fighters themselves. *Prize-fighters and swimmers are the only subjects that can be painted in the nude legitimately.*"

The nub, as Mark Twain says, of this revelation is his use of "legitimate." He was not referring to the Law or to the Gospel. Fighters and swimmers naturally were nude in public, and so could be painted truthfully. This concept was not original with Bellows — only his unique application. Bellows painted many nudes, both men and women, without ever forsaking his principle of giving them a setting or an action where nakedness was not posed, but inevitable.

His days as an artist were as direct, and tumultuous, and as spectacularly impatient as his college life. At the start he fell in with a group of rising young action seekers whose artistic mainsprings, like his own, were Americanism and stark reality. They foregathered for years in a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

studio on Sixty-sixth Street maintained by Bellows, Ted Ireland and Edward Keefe—Eugene O'Neill, John Sloan, William Glackens, Joseph Pennell, Eugene Speicher, Art Young, Kroll, Ben Ali Haggin, names that have come to stand for much that is revolutionary in modern art and literature.

Bellows' flair for direct action gave him the name of revolutionist himself. He denies the implication in a letter that is a keynote to his blunt, impetuous career. "First of all I am a painter," he wrote, "and a painter gets hold of life. That makes him think, and if he thinks out loud he is called a revolutionist."

Such forthright thinking out loud kept his path diverging constantly from every apparent new aim. It got him embroiled with the Academy; next the Independents dubbed him conservative for the same reason that the academicians called him a radical. He went blithely ahead, painting the things that interested him as he saw them, and thereby acquiring a following which knew little of either faction. The daring venture of Max Eastman and his associates in the *Masses* attracted him, and some of his best cartoons appeared on its pages with those of Sloan and Art Young. Just as they were hailing him as an accession to their militant ranks, he painted the virulent anti-German pictures that, except for the dramatic *Murder of Edith Cavell*, have since disappeared along with the propaganda that inspired them. Such rampant nationalism alienated him from the *Masses* and all its works. These episodes are not inconsistent. They characterize this American-trained American.

He did manage once to get abroad. In 1910 he married Emma Spencer of Montclair, New Jersey, since immortalized in her husband's famous painting, *Emma and the Children*. According to Mrs. Bellows the couple once

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

visited Niagara Falls, and one day Bellows insisted on walking across the International Bridge. On the other side, he stopped and looked around as one whose fond dreams had finally come true. "At last," he said. "I'm in furrin parts." Then he turned around and walked back.

Twenty years later, in the Gramercy Park neighborhood of New York, I realized that Ho's studio was nearby, and I wondered if he remembered that last Illinois game as vividly as myself. He did, although he was hazy about many other details of those days connected with baseball. The fiction writer's dream of a campus hero, as an alumnus he was a total loss. "I never could get excited about class reunions and all this bright-college-days stuff," he said. "I had a grand time at State, and then you fellows went your way and I went mine. And the fact that a few lawyers and engineers and brokers bluffed through some of the same courses I did once, never seemed to give me much in common with them. That's why I hardly ever attended an alumni reunion. Didn't seem to be much sense to it."

While the fall twilight dimmed we talked, not so much of old times, as of the later days and the storms and stresses we both had been dragged through since the days he had won a baseball game from the press bench. In two notable ways he had changed. His thatch of thick black hair had taken a permanent leave of absence, and for the first time in my knowledge of him he was content to sit still, and not try to talk all over at once. Less impetuous, but with a shrewder wisdom concealed in his easy, half epigrammatic talk, but alert and as engrossed in the living day as ever. The talk naturally veered to painting and I alluded, with customary approbation, to a picture of his I had seen in the Metropolitan Museum.

"You like it?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Great!"

"I don't particularly," said Bellows briefly. "Yet I thought it was great stuff when I painted it. But you get different ideas as you go along."

I asked him why he had never tried a football picture. There were two reasons, it appeared. As individuals the padded football players had nothing to compare with the muscular grace of the prize fighter's torso. As action, the game had too many focal points at once to make it interesting to an artist. You had a picture of a football game, and that was all.

We promised to get together again "in a few days." In a few days, however, I was on my way across the continent, and when I returned George Bellows was dead.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Carol for Christmas

TRISTRAM LIVINGSTONE

White snow in the country lane,
Brown snow on the street;
God save you, mortals, from all pain,
And cold, and frost, and sleet.

God bless the master of this hovel,
And give him health to bide,
And a gold pick and a silver shovel
To glitter at his side.

God save the wasted woman here
That shivers in the gloom,
And give her sugar and tea that's clear,
And firelight in her room.

And give the children sleeping there
A field of dancing grain,
A milking pail, and the morning air
Filled with forgotten rain.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our Economic Blue Laws

RICHARD DANA SKINNER

ARE THERE SUCH things as the Blue Laws of economics? Will tomorrow's historian, surveying the potential abundance of the inventive era, accuse us of denying that abundance and of turning our economic virtues into vices? Will he speak of the Blue Law economic code of the early twentieth century as we speak of the Blue Law moral code of the Puritans?

If he does, his diatribes will probably center about our ideas of waste. He will probably say that in an era when it was wholly obvious that "waste makes work," we groaned with unemployment under the Puritanical code that "waste makes want." He will note that a few apostles of intelligent wastage, like Lawrence Dennis, were treated almost as dangerous heretics. He will have great fun cataloging the economic witch-burnings of the nineteen-thirties.

It might be worth our while to anticipate some of his fun by looking our Blue Laws in the face today. Historical verdicts are of small comfort to the dead. We are, in fact, groaning with unemployment, and we are, in fact, bowing down to notions about waste that lost most of their meanings when the modern Prometheus brought science into our factories and onto our farms. There is still such a thing as sinful waste, of course. But the measuring standard has abruptly changed. It has changed just as radically as our measuring standard of distance. When we used to say that California was a long distance from New York, we were not thinking solely of the number of miles but also of the number of days consumed by the journey. Our conscious measure of distance

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was the mile, but our unconscious reckoning was in time. Today, by the time measure, San Francisco is much nearer to New York than Boston in 1800.

The point is, that time and miles were interchangeable measures just so long as methods of transportation remained unchanged. As long as transportation, year in and year out, was at the rate of ten miles an hour, it made no difference whether we said that the west coast was three thousand miles away or three hundred traveling hours away. Today, the distance in miles remains unaltered — but the effective distance has been reduced to twenty-four traveling hours. There is still distance (in miles) just as there is still harmful waste. But the intelligent measure of effective distance has changed, and the same is emphatically true of waste. The trouble is that we are not yet awake to the change. Some of us on the Atlantic seaboard still think of California as a far distant land, and cramp our horizons accordingly. Most of us still think of waste as we did in the hand labor days, and so put a cramp into human welfare.

There is a persistent and engaging legend that, following the depression of 1837, someone discovered an entire small city in the heart of Michigan, built during the preceding boom, but completely deserted. A salvaging group bought the city for the value of the tanbark scattered on the streets and the glass in the windows of the empty houses. It is quite possible that a forest now marks the spot. Was the salvaging of this city an act of sinful waste? Here were fixed assets in abundance, houses and streets produced by hours of human labor, items of civilized wealth created from the forests and mines and quarries — all wantonly destroyed by wrecking crews. Did not this wastage achieve sinful proportions?

Perhaps there was serious waste in the original building

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the city for the simple reason that, as events proved, human beings neither wanted nor needed it. The enthusiasm that built it was part of the froth of the boom, a mistaken anticipation of human needs that never materialized. But the salvaging of the mistake was certainly no waste. Instead of leaving destruction to time and weather, the salvaging operation provided work for men who needed work. It provided raw materials for new and useful enterprises, perhaps at some distant point, to replace the mistaken construction of the past. It moved materials from a place where men could not use them to a place where they were actually needed. It was a process of conversion and transplanting rather than waste, like the transplanting of a tree from exhausted to fertile soil.

This lost city of Michigan, a century ago, offers at least one clue to an intelligent modern doctrine of waste — that harmful waste lies only in producing what men do not want and can not use. By contrast, there is no harmful waste, even in deliberate destruction, when we convert or produce goods that men can use or actively exchange. The enthusiast who manufactures a mechanical egg-breaker, capable of breaking a hundred eggs a minute, for every family in the land, is certainly creating sinful waste. How many time-pressed families want a hundred-egg omelet for breakfast every morning? Even if all of them did, the hens would undoubtedly go on strike to smash the manufacturer's embryonic dream.

But the usefulness of goods produced is only one part of our measure of what makes true value as against waste. This utility measure was as sound and true five hundred years ago as today. It applied and still applies to all sorts of goods and to all sorts of utility, the utility to life and material comfort as well as the utility to the esthetic senses and to the mind, to eggs and hogs and corn and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bricks and clay as well as to pictures, statues, perfumes, cosmetics and poems. Try to imagine a world that could possibly be surfeited with Rembrandts or Dantes. The real change in our measuring standards of waste springs from our altered rate of consumption, that is, from our totally new ideas of obsolescence created by mechanical production at constantly lowering costs.

The humble drinking cup furnishes a good illustration. Once it was a magnificent gesture to throw away a goblet after drinking a toast. Today, in hundreds of thousands of offices, vice-presidents, clerks and stenographers throw away their drinking cups after every sip of plain water, and without the least thought of magnificence. The paper cup industry thrives and employs thousands of people as a result of this new habit. Theoretically, every paper cup could be treasured and used a dozen times over before wilting. But what sensible person would advocate throwing half the labor out of paper-cup factories by a campaign to make every cup serve a dozen drinks? It is a case of useful waste making much wanted work, of increasing the totality of useful barter and exchange. When the cost of something is reduced far enough, we instinctively welcome rapid use or obsolescence as an economic gain.

But how far are we prepared to carry this idea? Most happily for several millions of mechanics and miners and steel makers, we have already applied the drinking cup philosophy to automobiles. If you snoop around a few New England estates, you will still find in the stables two or three magnificent old carriages built for a lifetime and often cherished for two lifetimes. There they stand, covered with dust, tributes to an age whose highest ideal was to build for permanence, to conserve rather than consume most of the products of labor. What would our un-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

employment problem be today if we bought automobiles to last a generation? Yet that is precisely how we would be buying them if the manufacturers and the inventors had not deliberately created rapid obsolescence through mechanical improvements, style changes and constantly lowering prices.

Radio has created year-in and year-out employment for thousands by a similar policy of forced obsolescence — partly a deliberate policy borrowed from automobile experience, and partly a chance policy dictated by the activity of inventors. Millions of radio sets still capable of receiving signals have bounced to the ash cans and provided new replacement work for the factories, simply because someone has invented a new circuit or a new tube, or because the manufacturers have designed new and more alluring cabinets. By standards of the pre-inventive era, this is unholy waste. But the same technology that displaces man power on individual jobs has created a new type of obsolescence which absorbs more men than the machine has displaced.

The invention of packaged goods, for instance, was another boon to labor which more than compensated for the invention of box-making machinery. Quite aside from sanitary thoughts, the disappearance of the cracker barrel surely brought the employment of more men than were ever engaged in making barrels. The annual "wastage" of cardboard boxes and tin cans reaches an astronomical figure. But the workers in the can factories are exchanging their cans for the very food that someone else places in those cans. Pity the farmer and the miller and the railroads if we ever abandoned the idea of packaged goods because of the wastage of containers!

Yet, in spite of all of these spectacular examples of new measuring standards for waste (or obsolescence, if you

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

like the pleasanter sound of that word) it remains true that tomorrow's historian will indict us for our Blue Law code of waste. In one of the most important of all our industries, we do still groan with unemployment. The building industry has almost wholly failed to catch the contagion of a new time-standard for obsolescence.

There will always (I hope) be people who will cherish an old house, love the familiar contours of ceiling and woodwork, and feel that house and home are almost synonymous. But for the millions of rootless apartment dwellers and rent payers, and for the millions whose incomes will buy only houses that weather alone will destroy in two decades, the notion that we must build for permanence is not only absurd but criminally wasteful of human welfare.

All we have to do to clear our minds is to push this thought of permanent building to a logical limit. With steel and concrete as our materials, it would be quite possible to build every house from now on to last five hundred years. After completing the units for twenty million families — and thus creating a brief housing boom of astonishing proportions — we would then settle back to our half-millennium of permanence. All the structural steel workers, all the house builders, and all the cement mill workers, millions of them in the aggregate, would take a five hundred year vacation without pay. We would have achieved the ultimate ideal of all permanence — utter stagnation and atrophy. The farmers and the canners and the automobile and radio workers and the tradesmen would have the pleasure of supporting on dole the entire building industry personnel for the span of seven lives.

Yet this exaggerated and grotesque picture is not one whit more absurd than the notion that tearing down and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rebuilding the entire antique housing plant of America would be a sinful economic waste of "fixed assets." I do not know of an important office building or apartment house today which is not already hopelessly obsolete. Where, for example, do we find in one building complete central air-conditioning, proper and scientific arrangement of all rooms for adequate lighting and view (even in an office or factory a view contributes to efficiency) thorough fire protection, independent and self-contained heating and lighting units to offset the growing dangers of mechanical over-centralization, automatic refuse disposal, built-in radio and telephone contacts, and a few dozen other minor gadgets which active inventors have supplied since new building stopped about five years ago?

The fantastic giant pill-boxes which do service as luxury apartments along New York's Park avenue are obsolete in every one of these important details, not to mention their inherent esthetic horror. Even the very idea of towers and skyscrapers has been rendered precarious by the building of bridges and tunnels which permit a radial instead of a vertical development of greater New York. Many tenants who climbed fourteen or more stories daily during the 1936 elevator strike would now give their last dollars to live in modest, six story, air-conditioned independence. If they do not find it soon in the city, they will move to the country.

But the obsolescence of big buildings is slight compared to that of private houses, either in city or country. Consider the fire hazard alone in ninety-nine out of every hundred private houses. To what end do we cherish old family furniture, letters, documents, books, pictures and other works of art, if a match dropped in a wastebasket can destroy them in an hour? We insisted long ago on steel bodies for railroad cars and automobiles, but we

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

still cling to a potential national bonfire in the form of millions of wooden frame houses. The technology of new building materials makes a fireproof reconstruction of all the private houses in this country not only possible but, in all common sense, imperative. If the cost is high today, because of present limited use of steel and cement and composition materials, the cost would drop overnight if the potential demand were once realized.

Then there is the accumulated obsolescence in the construction of moving units on the railroads. Since we are supposed to live for hours or days in railroad cars, they, too, are part of the construction industry's potentials. A few new units, and many more old units, have air-conditioning of a sort. But what essential changes can we name in the sleeping car over the last forty years? We must still pay hotel rates (over and above the cost of being pulled along tracks) for standard dormitory or flophouse accommodation, utterly without privacy, and with our ears subject to the assault of the breathing of thirty close neighbors.

In all these matters, it is a new, keen, and active resentment of the obsolete that promises our sole relief from technological unemployment and slow economic death. We are not being conservative in seeking to conserve obsolete assets. A vastly more important obligation is to conserve the demand for human labor, in all industries and throughout every department of economic life, as we have already started to do in the case of the automobile, the drinking cup, the radio, and the tin can. Almost the only real wastage, measured by our new standard, is the wastage of human lives in sultry bread lines, and in carrying the conservation of "things" to the Puritanical point of denying work to men. That is the virtue of thrift turned into the vice of an economic Blue Law.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Heaven Doesn't Matter

CHANNING POLLOCK

WHEN THE CELEBRATED English poet and critic, Matthew Arnold, died, someone remarked, "Poor Matthew; *he* won't like God." If this wit had said, "He won't like heaven," more of us might have understood. I've never been able to get very excited about heaven myself.

There are many conceptions of heaven, of course, ranging from the Christian fundamentalist picture of streets of gold and mother-of-pearl down — or up — to the Buddhist state of forgetfulness. I shouldn't care for gold streets, and there's little I want to forget. Nirvana would make a greater appeal to me if it were a place of more vivid comprehension and remembrance; a place where you could look at the stars and the sea with ten times the thrill they gave you on earth. I don't see how the Indian happy hunting ground could be happy for the hunted, and I'm afraid the Mohammedan houris would bore me to tears.

Frankly, I can be facetious about all this because I'm skeptical about it. If that seems blasphemous to you, perhaps you'd better skip the rest. It doesn't seem blasphemous to me, and I suspect myself of being as genuinely and deeply religious as any literalist whose deity requites goodness with gold and punishes wickedness with fire.

The truth about me is less that I don't believe in any of these heavens than that I don't care whether they exist or not. To me, the question isn't important. I'm too much concerned with what I do while I live. The only heaven that really interests me is the heaven that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could be made right here. Perhaps that may be the only heaven that really interests God.

My reverend friend, Ralph W. Sockman, recently preached on what he called "the slot-machine attitude toward God." We put in a prayer or a decent act, he said, and expect to take out a prosperous business or an eternity of bliss. I concur with Dr. Sockman in doubting this as an evidence of superior Christianity. In one of my earlier plays, I opined that, "We are not punished for our sins, but by them." It is equally true, I think, that we are not rewarded for our good deeds, but by them. There is a singing ecstasy in good work. There must be an even greater and more immediate recompense for good deeds. The happiest men I know are the most occupied and the most useful. Honestly, I don't believe many of them ever give a thought to what may or may not become of them beyond the grave. In a sense, they regard that as none of their business.

Some of the most disagreeable people I know are quite sure to go to heaven. At least, *they* are quite sure of going, and they probably will, having given a great deal of attention to living up to the rules. However, their presence won't help much. One of the finest Christians of my acquaintance, Father Duffy, once told me of a nun who said that, after forty years among saints, she knew why Christ wanted to live among sinners. Maybe *that's* blasphemous, but a lot of reverent folk will know what she meant.

Most people who expect to survive expect to survive pretty completely. Any survival that diminishes the ego wouldn't be survival at all to them. But suppose their neuritis survives, too? Well, of course, it wouldn't; none of the things of the flesh can be taken with us into the perfect state. But shall we be ourselves without our

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neuritis? Shall we recognize dear old Aunt Jane in a state of perfection, or love her as much as we did when we could laugh at her little human failings, and care for her human needs? Shall we like her, or ourselves, as disembodied spirits? With my temporal mind, I can't think of anything I could be or do as a disembodied spirit that would interest or delight me. I've never thought of myself as a materialist, but the things I've enjoyed all seem to have required body and mind — a poem of Shelley's, first sight of the Grand Canyon, sunset from the roof of an hotel in Biskra, the smell of cornbread after a long walk in the autumn woods, and a glimpse of my wife through the window at the end of it, even rubbing Aunt Jane's poor aching arm, and seeing her smile as she sank into slumber.

In the resurrection, there is to be no marriage nor giving in marriage, and that's a big drawback, too. Personally, I can't conceive a heaven without it. My own ego is so inextricably blended with that of my wife, and my own happiness has been so long part of hers. Nor would it help much to be vaguely associated with her in spirit. Married life is made up of so many physical and mental contacts, of so many shared fears and hopes, sorrows and joys, pains and comfortings that both of us, and millions of other wives and husbands, couldn't help missing terribly in any conceivable resort of souls. True, this is the finite idea of it, but we are finite, and whenever we go beyond that we enter a realm I am willing to leave out of my calculations until I know more about it.

Singularly enough, it is that very prospect of reunion after death that has given immortality its allure. "When you lose your loved ones," Basil King used to say to me, "you'll feel differently about all this." Perhaps he was right; I never lost a loved one, nor do I ever expect to do

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so. My profoundest conviction is that nothing loved is ever lost. (Like most of my profound convictions, this was Emerson's, too.) My father died when I was fourteen, and thus achieved what seems to me the truest immortality. If he had lived, he would have been eighty-five now — perhaps a tried, infirm old man. Through death, he became eternally young, eternally vital and alive. I see him, and shall always see him, as I last saw him, a busy man, at his desk, happy in his work, younger and stronger than I am now, and wiser and kinder than I shall ever be.

Every wise word he ever spoke, every kind act he ever did, is immortal. "I never knew your father," a woman remarked to me the other day, "but *my* father told me of so many fine things he did and said." Loving life, and free to go where he pleased, my father died at his post of duty. Thereby he added to the immortal tradition of courage and nobility. A world in which everyone is courageous and noble and self-sacrificing and honorable will be heaven enough for most of us, and that world will be populated chiefly by the immortal souls of the men and women who made it possible. I believe in divinity as I believe in immortality — in the divinity of anyone who lives a life "pertaining to, proceeding from, or of the nature of God;" in the immortality of anyone whose influence, good or ill, continues after him.

I am much happier in the recollection of my father — of his unflinching eyes, and his gentle smile, and his whimsical way of reminding us of the eternal things — than I could be in any prospect of meeting him again as a disembodied spirit. It was he who told us that we are punished *by* our sins. At that time he was United States Consul at San Salvador, and we children had eaten too much of a native fruit. "A gentleman pays his debts,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLIC LIBRARY
NEWARK, OHIO

keeps his word, and never takes too much of *anything*," he said. No ghostly voice could have been as unforgettable. When we begged him to use the steamship tickets he had bought for the vacation that was due him, but that he had put aside because yellow fever was decimating our colony, he answered, "I don't think any responsible officer should be away at a time like this. Our people are frightened and confused; some of them have been refused Christian burial. It's my job to stay and look after them."

He did stay, frequently reading the funeral service over our countrymen who succumbed to the pestilence. "Have you no fear?" my mother asked. "None as great as the fear of not doing what I believe to be right," my father said. He contracted the fever that day. Because of his example, at nineteen, I resigned my position on a Washington newspaper when the editor insisted that I swell his advertising by writing what I didn't believe to be true, and, in consequence, nearly starved before I found work trucking on a dock in New York. And because of my example my son may do the like when I am gone, and his son when he is gone. This seems to me the only kind of survival worth striving for. Certainly, it has accomplished more for heaven and earth than any bait of celestial compensation.

Hu Shih, father of the Chinese Renaissance, wrote in his book *Living Philosophies*: "As I reviewed the life of my dead mother, whose activities had never gone beyond the trivial details of the home but whose influence could be clearly seen on the faces of those men and women who came to mourn her death, and as I recalled the personal influence of my father on her whole life and its lasting effect on myself, I came to the conviction that *everything* is immortal. Everything that we are, everything that we do, everything that we say is immortal in the sense that it has

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

its effect somewhere in the world, and that effect in turn will have its results somewhere else, and the thing goes on in infinite time and space. A man is what he thinks and everyone who has influenced him — from Socrates, Plato, and Confucius down to his parish preacher and his nursery governess — lives in him."

"Ennoblement comes to man in the degree that his consciousness quickens," Maeterlinck says in *Wisdom and Destiny*. "Even as love is insatiable in its craving for love, so is consciousness insatiable in its craving for growth, for moral uplifting."

We are not children who must be made to behave well by the promise of candy; we are not weaklings who must be held up, instigated, consoled by glory to come. Eternal bliss may be grand in eternity; our present concern would seem to be intensified perception of the beauty about us, intensified progress toward justice, human love for human kind, and the by-no-means-trifling job of leaving the world, or some one of its population, a little better for our having been in it. Civilization is a pyramid to which each man contributes a grain of sand — a pyramid whose broad base was laid on the Nile, and to which almost every successive generation has added something.

My heaven is everywhere about us. If you need to believe in the other kind, don't let me dissuade you. It isn't that I *don't* believe; only that, for me, that other heaven doesn't matter. Not now, anyway. I'm too busy. I want to go on with my work, and leave the outcome to God.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The White Cathedral

DANIEL WHITEHEAD HICKY

Deep in the winter woods I went
Alone, and quite alone.
Above me boughs of cedar bent,
Carved and quiet as stone.

There was no bird in all that wood,
No grey surprise of hare,
And I could see from where I stood
No footprint there.

Where morning went I never knew,
And I could never tell
Which was the path where laurel grew
Or birch, or winterbell.

But pausing there like one gone blind,
How good it was to know
Wherever I looked that I would find
Contentment deep as snow,

And hear no word and see no thing
In all that world of white
To question this pale leveling,
This shining height.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Traveler Rests

WILSON McCARTY

FINDING that he had a quarter of an hour to spare before his "little friend," as he called her, would come to say goodbye to him, Stewart Martin sat down to write a letter to his mother who was seventy.

He had been on the road two months; he had six weeks more through Ohio, Indiana, and New York before he could go home. All he thought of writing was how tired he was of traveling. But he was a shy man who had lived alone all his life, who had never married and who had fallen into a habit of apologizing with little jokes for feelings which he thought too serious or too uninteresting to express. And he hesitated to begin, but sat looking idly about the hotel room wondering whether he might not write an amusing preface on its atrocious furniture.

It was all very bad Spanish Mission which carried out some sort of motif of the Conquistadors. There was a four-poster bed with a canopy of mauve and a spread of pink. Martin had put his open suitcase on it, with stacks of the vivid jackets of the books he was selling piled around it, ready for packing. The walls were of some two-tone shade which suggested a symphony on the organ of a super-luxe movie palace where rainbows are played on a silver curtain with colored lights. An open door showed a biliously moroccan bathroom. The windows gave onto the Square, but the shades were drawn now. And looking about at it all, trying to think of some amusing comment, Martin felt suddenly sick. It nauseated him. It struck him with depressing force that it was not only in this Ohio town but all over the world that he had met with the same lack of taste, the same lack of imagination and the same pan-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dering to the mass notion of grandeur. In his youth he had dreamed of destroying this bourgeois mediocrity with writings fashioned after Voltaire; and now, though he had become more sensible and content to write a few stories about his adventures in the Orient while he made up his living as a publishers' representative, in middle life flashes of that same furious purpose still assailed him.

He sat thinking for ten minutes, then abruptly dashed off a few conventional lines hoping his mother was well and not going back on her diet.

It struck half past five.

He addressed the envelope and went quickly to the window. The street lamps were already on and the shops were being lighted. At the other end of the Square he saw a familiar dot. He watched it grow, walking hurriedly past the people and the dark trees. There was no mistake. It was Dorothy. He watched her tiny feet pacing towards the hotel, her furs glistening in the lights, while from the distance her eyes seemed to shine.

He had met her in one of the bookshops on his Sales Sheet. She was in charge of the store alone a good part of the day; and, as occasionally happened when he was to be in one place several days, he found it pleasant to strike up an acquaintance. In this case she was not actually pretty, but there was something reticent and youthful about her that appealed to him. She had asked whether he was from New York, and when he had answered in his tired quizzical voice, smiling a little as if there were some secret joke, that he had been traveling so confoundedly many years, selling one thing or another, that he had practically forgotten where he was from, New York, Denver, London or Timbuctoo, she had laughed and said that at first she had taken him for English and that she had always longed to go to England, that she had a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

feeling life was more interesting abroad. But at once she had blushed, for it was obvious she did not know exactly what she meant and was speaking only from a vague yearning to go away somewhere.

Martin liked this direct, naive way of talking and the next day he went to see her again. He took her for lunch and when they walked along the street, she was full of refreshing interest in the people. His remarks about them seemed to amuse her too. And she seemed fascinated by the casual way he mentioned cities all over the United States and many in Europe besides. And she began coming to see him after the bookshop was closed. They dined in the lurid, soft-carpeted diningroom called the Moorish Room, talking quietly while a female band played. Occasionally they danced. Each night when he took her home, he thought how restful she was. She made no demands on him. He knew exactly the extent of their relationship, that she was a charming, sensible girl, and that too made him look forward to each following day when she would come again.

And now he was leaving.

Dropping the curtain, he went to the mantel where stood a Persian vase of an extraordinary, very vivid robin's-egg-blue. He had noticed it in a shop window earlier in the day and, being drawn first by its color, he had bought it as a farewell present for her, though it had not occurred to him whether she would like it or even appreciate it. His impulse had been simply to share his pleasure with someone. Now he wondered for the first time whether, in the moment of parting, she might think it a declaration of love. As he stood before it, debating whether he should give it to her, four light taps sounded on the door. At once he called in answer and she came in. Her furs did not glisten, her eyes were not as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shining as they had seemed under the street lamps.

They looked at each other a second hesitatingly, then Martin put an arm around her affectionately and said in a low voice: "I was wondering whether you'd be coming along. I was just packing." At the word packing a troubled look came into her eyes. But she began talking quickly, punctuating her recitation with "then" and "let me see." Martin listened gravely, murmuring only an occasional word; but he noticed she must have spent considerable time at the hairdresser, though she did not mention it.

While for herself, she felt she was chattering stupidly, that Martin was not paying any attention and that he must be thinking of her in only one way. And the quieter he was, the more helpless she felt; so that she talked more, making up things which had never happened and criticizing people whom she really admired, to find in the end that she had had a headache all day.

She had known Martin only ten days, but she felt closer to him than anyone she had ever met. He seemed to understand, in his quiet, half-humorous way, everything that made life monotonous. And she confessed everything about herself. She confided she had thought herself in love at nineteen, had given herself and been disillusioned. And that all she lived for now was the hope of one day traveling and meeting all sorts of new people and developing herself. But she was afraid to leave her mother, though she disliked her, and did not know how to begin to find the things she wanted. When she told him this, Martin had answered little; he had offered no solution, but in the quiet way he looked at her he seemed to understand what was wrong; and gradually she had forgotten what it was that troubled her.

But now when she saw him preparing to leave, prob-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ably forever, she thought of all this as she heard herself chattering on about the day; and suddenly she stopped, looked intently at him a moment, then said: "I'm going to miss you frightfully, Mart."

"Tut-tut," he answered, at once smiling in his bantering, apologetic way of talking. "The hotel and I want you to have this little souvenir."

He took the Persian vase from the mantel. Dorothy started to smile, then stopped, not sure whether he were teasing her.

"From me to you!" he proclaimed with a mock-flourish. "A farewell present!"

He handed it to her quickly, then busied himself with his packing. He heard her start to exclaim, so he added in an amusing voice like an usher in a theatre: "No talking during the performance, please."

Dorothy turned the vase over and over, then for apparently no reason she sobbed softly. Martin went quickly to her side; she took his hand and held it against her cheek. Tears ran slowly onto it.

"Don't cry, Dorothy," he said as if he were talking to a child. "Look! It isn't broken!"

"Oh, I'm silly! Forgive me, Mart. I'm sorry!" She dabbed at her eyes, trying to smile. They were both silent for a moment. Then she said, "You shouldn't give me anything, Mart. You don't love me."

"Come, come," he answered; and was about to add, "Of course I don't love you! What has that to do with it?" but he stopped himself when he looked at her tear-stained face. In all his life it seemed to him that he had never met and probably never would meet a woman who would accept him as a person, as an individual who asked no more of people than amusement and friendship and the exchange of ideas; but always they ended up by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thinking of him in terms of self, as if they expected something of him or he something of them, and as if their lives were like diagonal lines that must meet and be welded together at some inevitable point.

"Come, come," he repeated, "I'm leaving tonight, so I wanted to give you something. We've such grand times together." He hurried on, lest she cry more. "I shall miss you. I'm going to miss you terribly. Do you know that? I've grown used to your coming here every day, to talking and playing cards and having a dance downstairs." He looked at the clock and said with gaiety, "Yes, and I think we should go down now, in a few moments . . . have one last big dinner! Hmmmm? What do you say?"

There was an awkward silence. Feeling selfconscious and wanting to comfort her, he remembered a dramatic line he had seen inscribed on a cast-iron wreath in an undertaker's window in Paris one winter he had spent there in his youth. Assuming a long face like a pallbearer, he now declaimed it in a ringing voice which he thought would distract her and make her see the funny side of their parting: "*Tout passe, tout s'efface sauf le souvenir.*"

But Dorothy did not understand what he was saying, other than that it was French, and did not find his long face amusing. She looked at him intently, as if she could barely restrain herself, and he added quickly, smiling a bit wrily: "Come, come! Don't be sad, my dear. In a week you'll have met someone else and I, well, let's be honest, I too shall have met someone, I suppose."

Still Dorothy sat quite stiffly and silent, looking at the vase in her lap. "Do you think I could find work in Paris?" she asked at last. "There must be English bookshops there."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Paris?"

"I'd like to get away from here." He said nothing and she added simply, "You've made me hate it here."

"But my dear — " he began.

"Oh yes you have, Mart," she hurried on. "You've told me about all the places you've been, you've talked about philosophy, you've given me ideas. You haven't realized it, Martin; you've thought it was just fun and that I'd not think about it one way or the other. But I have. I can't help it. I take things terribly seriously, Martin. I suppose it's the Scotch blood in me," she added distractedly. She walked to and fro, stopped midway and placed the Persian vase on the mantel. "You've made me hate it here, Martin. You've made my life seem dull and stupid and — well, I just know I could never stay here any more."

While she had been speaking, Martin had stood quietly by the bed. He had put down some things he was about to pack, and was waiting for her to stop. Now he went to the table, poured a little brandy into two glasses, gave her hers without a word, and said very quietly:

"But my dear, where would you go? Think of that, Dorothy. Where would you like to go? There's no good just going to Paris. Or to Chicago. Or New York. Even if you could get a job. What good would that do? After two or three months you'd be just as bored there as you are here."

"No, no, Martin, you don't understand. I know it's the same all over, but . . . well, you just don't understand."

Martin considered a moment and said:

"Of course I understand. I've felt the same way myself. Good Lord, when I was your age, fifteen or sixteen years ago, I felt exactly the same way."

"Exactly!" Dorothy exclaimed furiously. "And you

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLIC LIBRARY
NEWARK, OHIO

did go! You told me all about it. You ran away from home because you couldn't bear it. You lied about your age and got sent abroad in the War. You were in the Vienna hospital six months with ulcers. I wouldn't mind ulcers if I could be in Vienna!" She looked at him directly, appealingly. "You took a chance!" she flung out. "You lost, but you took a chance! And that's all I ask for, a chance! I'll be game if I lose. Honestly."

Martin was standing opposite her by the center table. The light overhead shone directly upon him, casting shadows on his long face and high thin nose and black, graying hair.

"But that's just my point, my dear," he said eagerly. "Don't you see? The things I've done — what do they count for today? Have they made me any happier? No. On the contrary, they've wasted my entire life. What am I? A traveling salesman! You can call me by the dignified title of Publishers' Representative if you want, but I know what I am. And why?" He came down the room until he stood against the table opposite her. "Dorothy, I'm sorry. I don't want you to take this so seriously. I don't want you to rush off — " a shy, twisted smile came to his face, " — and become one of those gaunt women marching steadfastly to their doom in the iron casinos along the Riviera, or peering up at cathedral spires all day. There's nothing in it. Life is much simpler than that. My God! Do you think I should be here selling books to little shops like yours? I should be *writing* books!"

He lifted his hand to his eyes, screening them from the light, and looked at her vaguely, thinking of his past. But seeing she was about to object, his face tightened. "Oh, I don't mean I'm a failure, my dear," he said quickly. "After all, I started out quite well. My father was a brilliant lawyer. He was offered a Supreme Court

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

judgeship. And I wrote two or three pamphlets that caused quite a stir. At least I met quite a lot of well known people. Only I ask myself now, What of it? I remember very well how seriously I took all that a few years ago. Why, I thought if I didn't make a fortune and become famous overnight, life would be ended! And if anyone criticized me or I was disappointed in some love affair, I thought I'd commit suicide. Really!" He paused, that humorous, apologetic expression coming to his face, as if he were ashamed of speaking so seriously about himself. "Really," he repeated, "I can't understand how I wasted so much time and so much energy!"

Dorothy looked at the clock on the mantel and said: "What time does your train go, Martin?"

"I don't know. It doesn't matter. Why? Am I boring you?" And before she could reply, he went on with renewed seriousness. "But let me say one thing more, because this bears on your own case. All that I'm trying to say, my dear, is that when we're young, we complicate life so. We think we want this. We think we want that. We make decisions which are based on no real thought of our own, but upon some prejudice or tradition handed down to us by people living a hundred years ago. Or at least by people whose circumstances are very different from our own. And then we discover they won't do for us. They dissatisfy us. And that makes us hysterical. We rush from pillar to post, trying new jobs, going new places, falling in love with each new person — when all the time life is really so simple! If only we could see the truth! If only we could realize that all that matters is one's mind!"

At the word "mind" a tear, which had been forming behind Dorothy's eyes, dropped and rolled down each cheek. Seeing them, Martin quickly added in a voice full

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of humility and suppressed emotion, almost in a whisper, "And compassion. Compassion for each other."

Dorothy looked at him with a blank expression, as if all he had said were beside the point. "Oh it may seem simple to you," she replied, "but I'm afraid that for me it isn't. I don't understand you at all. Or yes," she thought suddenly, "I understand you perfectly. Of course I understand you. You've traveled a great deal, you've met lots of people, and that makes everything seem simple to you. As if it were a sort of L.C.D.," she smiled, remembering arithmetic from her school days. "But with me it isn't so. I've lived here all my life. I've been brought up to keep house, to be silent in the presence of my elders, to be, I suppose, a woman. Is that my fault? How could I have changed it? You find me dull, I'm sure, lacking in poise. I'm frightened when I come here and have to knock four times on the door. I'm shy when you make love to me. But what do you expect? I'm not a . . . a . . . " she hesitated and brought out slowly, "a *petite femme*, as you call them."

A blush came to her cheeks.

"Come, let's have some dinner," Martin said quickly. He flooded the room with light. "Powder and prink, my dear, or the food will taste badly."

They ate in the Moorish Room, listening to the female band. When a solo was played, Dorothy told him that she had studied the violin as a child, but Martin manipulated the conversation into a lighter vein. And finally her melancholy seemed to be dissipated and she began to eat with more relish.

In a little while, he reflected, he would be on the train, half-wanting and half-avoiding the usual sort of talk with his fellow travelers. And he thought of how once he had left a girl in much the same circumstances as he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was now leaving Dorothy. On that occasion, he remembered, he had jumped out of the train at the first station, scribbled an affectionate, hysterical telegram to her, and leaped back into the smoking compartment. "Darling," that message had said, "miss you dreadfully don't forget me altogether." Looking back on it now, he saw that it had been addressed, not really to that girl for whom he had cared nothing even at the time, but he had sent it, on the spur of a nostalgic, self-pitying moment, to something unfound within himself. And thinking of this now as he ate, he smiled at himself for the torture of that moment; and he looked at Dorothy with real fondness and pity, and was suddenly overcome with how extraordinary life is; and he felt happy that he was a traveler and that he was going on to a new town.

But afterwards when they were upstairs again and the porter had come for his things and the big, garish room had taken on that bare, deserted quality which hotel rooms seem to acquire directly one's things are moved out of them, a vague sort of fear, a wave of weariness and isolation came over him. And he was loathe to go.

He looked at Dorothy standing by the center table idly following the headlines of an old newspaper, he thought of all he had said to her with such conviction; and it seemed suddenly empty and irrelevant and pompous. It seemed to him that he had not said at all what he really felt, that all he had said was just so much logic, cold and wordy. But what it was he wanted to say, what it was he really felt, he did not know. He could only vaguely sense it — something appallingly missing in the bare empty room where the girl stood by the table.

"Dorothy," he began, running his fingers through his hair.

She glanced at him. He was standing by the desk,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

looking down with knit brows. The letter he had written his mother was in his line of vision. He picked it up and gazed at it without thinking.

"Do you want a stamp?" Dorothy asked.

"What? Oh. Have you one?"

She took one from her purse and gave it to him. He put it on the envelope.

"A note to my mother," he murmured.

"Oh? What's she like?"

"I don't know. She's very practical. Dorothy," he said suddenly, "I hate leaving like this."

"But why? You have to go. That's all there is to it."

"Yes, I know."

"Is that clock right?"

He compared it with his watch.

"I think it's fast."

He said nothing more, but stood looking at her with a curious, uncertain expression as if he were waiting for something. Self-conscious beneath his silent gaze, she touched her hair, tucking back wisps of it under her hat which she had kept on since dinner. Then she too became quiet and self-composed and stood by the table watching him and not thinking at all.

And all at once he began talking to her in a low, impassioned voice that she had never heard him use before. He talked without direction, without hearing what he was saying, first about loneliness and then about his youth. For a few moments Dorothy did not heed his words either, but listened only to the tone of his voice, strangely transported by it; and little by little, entirely unconsciously, some meaning sprang up between them.

He told her how he frequently despaired of life, how bored he was, how he sometimes went to bed at seven o'clock rather than face the evening alone, and how he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fought to conquer this by reading and by interesting himself in the things that were going on in the world. It was his story that he told, not hers, but in it she found a parallel to her own life that was strangely comforting. It drew her near to him to hear this grown man, who had traveled all over the world, confess to the same confusion which tormented her; it gave her confidence to find how human and simple he was; it stimulated her, it set her mind running with all sorts of ideas, it took her outside of herself and made her feel combinations she had never suspected, that it was extraordinary and that she wanted to give herself to it, evolve something beautiful from it.

Martin talked on for half an hour without stopping; and when he had finished, there were tears in his own eyes as well as in hers. Getting up, he took her hands, held them a moment in both of his, then began kissing her hair, her eyes, and her lips. And when he drew her up to him, he held her more tightly than he had ever held her before.

"Dorothy . . . my sweet one . . ." he murmured, terms of endearment coming to his lips automatically.

"Mart . . . Martin," she answered, holding close to him, "You don't love me. How could you love me? I'm a very plain, stupid person. How could you love me?"

For a moment Martin said nothing. He thought how right this girl in his arms was. She was ordinary, she was not beautiful. His eye fell on the Persian vase he had bought for her as a farewell present, and he realized their tastes were very different, that she would never really understand him nor share his real loneliness.

But he was tired. He wanted again the intense feelings of youth. He wanted to get outside of himself and to protect someone young and innocent. But back of all this was a reason which impelled him more than anything

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

else: and that was a sense which had grown upon him with the years, a sense that accounted to him in his depressed and impotent moments for all the disenchantment of his life — the sense that life was very much the same under all circumstances; that it would be the same with any girl he might find. Like the towns to which he traveled, each one would be the same. And he was tired of going on. . . .

Besides, he reflected, he could make her quite happy and at least give her the change and escape that she wanted so much.

"You mean more to me than anyone or anything I've ever had in my life," he said at last and his voice trembled with emotion.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two Poems by William R. Benét

NEED OF IRON

How we exult when aught within us
Draws approbation from the eye;
What oily unguents still can win us,
How little truth we perish by!

By God, but I was born to laughter
And merry comrades make me glow;
Until, the merciless moment after,
Chilled to the heart — I know, I know.

The revelling blood where praise is siren
Delays not rushing to my cheek;
Then afterthought, that tastes of iron,
Past all imagination bleak.

Out through the doors, that cast so golden
A carpet on the cold and snow!
No Solon are you now, or Soldan,
But know austerely what you know.

Too trivial the difference whether
Their flattery meet you or their jeers.
Return into your native weather
Where sharply you can breathe the years!

Wheel above wheel the stars are turning,
The wide night empty of offense.
Take to your breast like daggers burning
Their scorn — or their indifference.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TO MY SON

Your loyalty's to a vision. . . . So mine was
And is and, though it change, not far from yours.
Nor do I think it changes, for as years pass
The dream endures.

Now it is imminent on you, integral light
And, as I dreamed it, real. . . . I dream it still
Though like a treadmill now I find the way to the height
While you leap up the hill.

This is beautiful valor — something I could not touch
To spoil, could I spoil it — to whisper of Man's duress.
One has seen, one has known, one has loved overmuch. . . .
My years against your guess.

Oh I know the plan of the truth, as I knew the chart
When it all was crystal clear and the world re-made.
Yet, all things are possible to the incredible heart,
And why should I be afraid?

Not of any future where such as you are bound,
Not of your dream of justice and freedom for Man,
Not, surely, of the high hawk and the lean hound
That ran once where I ran —

Only for this, for something I so much prize
That with far more fiery hate than yours I hate
What may have power to change this look in your eyes
As you clench your fist in the gate.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Preserve, Protect, and Defend —"

MALCOLM R. EISELEN

THE INAUGURATION of an American President is less elaborate than a British coronation, less turbulent than a South American coup d'etat, but it possesses the charm of infinite variety. There have been inaugurations grave and inaugurations gay, inaugurations under sunny skies and amidst raging blizzards. Some have been held in a spirit of tranquillity, others upon the forbidding threshold of civil war and economic catastrophe. Some have been mere formalities imposed by the calendar, others have represented political revolutions of far-reaching significance. Once, even, there was an inauguration which had to be postponed for lack of a president to inaugurate.

It was the nation's first inauguration which found itself in this unique predicament. All the preliminaries for launching the new government had been arranged. The expiring Congress of the Confederation had chosen the place, New York City, and set the date, March 4, 1789. Public-spirited citizens had at their own expense fitted out Federal Hall, on Wall street, to house the new government. The presidential electors had been chosen by the several states, and in due course had cast their ballots. At sunset on March 3, the guns of New York's famed Battery had joyously sounded the death salute of the old Confederation. Then, the next morning, the city awoke to a humiliating embarrassment. Neither in the House nor in the Senate could they raise a quorum, and without a quorum the electoral votes could not be counted. According to law, the President's term had actually begun; according to the Constitution, there was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no president — an oversight distressingly fundamental.

Frantically, letters were dispatched to the absentees, urging the necessity of their immediate attendance, but transportation was slow and the members apathetic. Day after day, a handful of senators and representatives gathered in Federal Hall, sadly counted the vacant seats, and adjourned to the more congenial surroundings of a nearby tavern. Slowly the absent members drifted in, but it was not until April 6 that both Houses were able to raise a quorum. Not until then, thirty-three days after his term had actually begun, was George Washington officially proclaimed President of the United States.

General Washington, at Mount Vernon, had been awaiting the inevitable news of his election with profound misgivings. He was reluctant to leave the peace of the plantation. His finances, after his long years of Revolutionary services, were at a low ebb. His aged mother was in her last illness. Even more, he mistrusted his ability to guide the nation upon the hazardous and untrodden path which lay before it. Nevertheless, he knew, as did his countrymen, that his place was at the helm of the new government. So, with relucant haste, he prepared to depart for New York, although he confided in a letter to his Secretary of War that "my movements to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution." When, on April 16, Washington finally set out for the federal capital, his diary sadly recorded the departure: "About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mt. Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and, with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York in company with Mr. Thomson and Colonel Humphreys with the best disposition to render service to my country

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations."

Scarcely less were the misgivings with which the members of Congress awaited Washington's arrival. They were starting out upon an uncharted path of national existence for which there were no precedents. Vital questions of procedure would have to be decided. For instance, what title should be used in addressing the chief executive? Many of the more aristocratic members of the Senate felt that the mere title of President was too plebeian. Fire companies and cricket clubs, it was pointed out, had presidents.

A week before the inauguration, a Senate committee was appointed to report a title which would better accord with Washington's personal dignity and the prestige of the new office. The committee deliberated and in due course came forward with the soul-stirring title, His Highness, the President of the United States of America, and Protector of their Liberties. The more democratic House would have none of it. Washington was consulted in the matter and suggested the even more resounding title of His High Mightiness. This too was rejected, as were His Elective Majesty and His Excellency. One member suggested that if the president were to be known as His Excellency, the vice president ought to be designated His Superfluous Excellency. Another, with an eye to certain of Vice President Adams' physical characteristics, sardonically suggested that he might well be called His Rotundity. As a matter of fact, the question of title never did get settled, and to this day the President of the United States may be addressed in whatever terms good breeding or partisan animosity suggest.

It was not until April 30 that all was in readiness for the nation's first inauguration. The day dawned bright and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clear; the streets were thronged with festive spectators. All the military that New York and the vicinity could muster were forming for the inaugural procession. Meanwhile, in the Senate chamber, everything was confusion. At the last moment, there had been raised a momentous question of etiquette. When the President appeared to deliver his inaugural address, should he be received by Congress sitting or standing? Immediately the Senate, found itself divided. Some said that it should remain seated as did the House of Lords during the speech from the throne. Others believed that it should stand, as did the House of Commons upon that occasion. Still a third group protested against any attempt to ape the follies of a degenerate monarchy.

Suddenly, in the midst of the debate, it was recalled that they had forgotten to send the proper committee to escort the President-elect from his lodgings to the Capitol. Hastily the committee was dispatched. Then followed more than an hour of anxious waiting. In the interval, it was discovered that there was no Bible upon which to administer the oath of office. Consequently, it was necessary to send a messenger posthaste to a near-by Masonic lodge to secure a copy of the Holy Writ.

General Washington finally arrived, escorted by a large procession of distinguished citizens. He was dressed in a suit of dark brown broadcloth, white stockings, plain silver shoe buckles, a steel-hilted dress sword, his hair powdered and gathered in a bag. Eyewitnesses noted with some surprise that the General, who could face the entire British army without a tremor, was visibly perturbed, that his hand trembled and his voice shook so that it could scarcely be understood.

Washington would have preferred that the oath be administered in private, but he was overruled by his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

political advisers. Accordingly, the official party proceeded to an open balcony, looking down upon Wall street, where a large crowd had assembled. The oath was administered not by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, for that body had not yet been appointed, but by Robert R. Livingston, Chancellor of New York. Washington stood with bowed head, his hand upon the Bible, and as the prescribed oath was finished he solemnly added, "I swear, so help me God." Then he bent over and reverently kissed the book. Livingston thereupon stepped forward, raised his hand and proclaimed, "Long live George Washington, President of the United States." At the words, a large flag was raised over Federal Hall, the cannon boomed out from the Battery, the bells of the city pealed, and the crowd broke into cheers.

The new President bowed his acknowledgments to the people and then withdrew to the Senate chamber. As he entered, the entire assemblage, all questions of procedure forgotten, spontaneously arose and remained standing throughout the reading of the inaugural address. It was not a great inaugural as such things go, for Washington was never a master of the spoken word. It was, however, a significant one. It served notice to the American people and to the world that the political anarchy of the Confederation period was now ended, and that the nation had at last achieved a real government with both the power and the courage to act.

WHEN Thomas Jefferson took oath of office March 4, 1801, it was more than an inauguration; it was a political and geographical revolution. Politically, it represented the triumph of Jeffersonian democracy and the death knell of the Federalist party. Geographically, it was the first inauguration held in the new capital city of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington, to which the government had been moved during the closing months of the Adams administration.

As the setting for a great political revolution, the new Federal City left much to be desired. Created overnight out of a sticky swamp, Washington was still little more than a frontier hamlet, a clearing in the forest. Only one wing of the Capitol building was finished. The Executive Mansion, or as it was more frequently called, the President's Palace, was anything but palatial. The occupants had to climb a ladder to get to the second floor, the roof leaked, and the floors were beginning to sag because built of unseasoned wood. Abigail Adams had used the East room as a convenient place in which to hang the family wash. The structure was surrounded, according to a contemporary observer "with a rough rail fence five or six feet high unfit for a decent barnyard."

Between the Capitol and the President's Palace lay a mile of swamp, through which flowed a muddy stream called Goose Creek. Jefferson, however, was a student of the classics and hastened to rename the stream the River Tiber. Pennsylvania avenue was merely a stretch of "yellow, tenacious mud." Commenting upon the condition of Washington roads, an early wayfarer reported: "The Chuck holes were not bad, that is to say they were none of them much deeper than the Hubs of the hinder wheels. They were however exceedingly frequent." A French diplomat, viewing the place for the first time, exclaimed, "My God! What have I done to reside in such a city!" Thomas Moore, British poet, ridiculed

> This embryo capital, where fancy sees
> Squares in morasses, obelisks in trees;
> Where second-sighted seers, even now adorn
> With shrines unbuilt and heroes yet unborn,
> Though nought but woods and Jefferson they see,
> Where streets should run and sages *ought* to be.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Against such a background, an elaborate inaugural would have been incongruous. Also, it would have been very repugnant to Jefferson's democratic tastes. His predecessor had been driven to his inauguration in a gilded coach, drawn by six white horses. Jefferson, attended only by a small body of militia and a few personal friends, quietly walked from his lodgings to the Capitol to take the presidential oath.

Meanwhile, partisan feelings were running high. To many a disappointed Federalist, Jefferson's election seemed to foretell the dissolution of the Republic. John Adams, the outgoing President, could not bear even to witness the triumph of his successor. Until the stroke of midnight on the third of March, he had sat at his desk signing the appointments of loyal Federalists to public office. Then, after this final gesture of defiance, he called for his carriage and had himself driven hastily from the city. He felt, explains his kinsman Henry Adams, that another American Revolution had occurred and that his presence at the inauguration would have been "as little in place as George III would have appeared at the installation of President Washington."

It was a strange group which fate brought together in the Senate chamber on that fourth of March. There was Chief Justice John Marshall, the ardent nationalist; President Thomas Jefferson, the stalwart advocate of states rights; and Vice President Aaron Burr, whose eccentric orbit in American politics could never quite be charted. These three men had only one thing in common — they distrusted and disliked one another thoroughly. Jefferson and Marshall were cousins, but politically and temperamentally they were as divergent as the antipodes. As for the Vice President, the only two things that Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton ever agreed

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in were their admiration for George Washington and their utter contempt for Aaron Burr.

Despite these untoward circumstances, the ceremony passed off smoothly and harmoniously. The mild tone of the inaugural came as a pleasant surprise to the Federalists, who had regarded all Jeffersonians as "apostles of atheism and anarchy, bloodshed and plunder." Far from breathing impiety and revolution, it was a broad plea for conciliation and cooperation between men of all parties. Jefferson's first inaugural, however, is best remembered in another connection, for it is here that there appears the historic phrase "entangling alliances," so often and so mistakenly attributed to Washington's Farewell Address.

Not all Democrats have come to the presidency as unostentatiously as Thomas Jefferson. When Andrew Jackson, for instance, assumed the office in 1829, it was with the discreet secrecy of a circus procession. There has never been another inauguration such as his, nor is it likely that there ever will be.

To conservative Washingtonians, Jackson's election came as a distinct shock. In many ways he was unlike any of his predecessors. He was the first president who had grown up west of the mountains; who was not descended from an old and aristocratic family; who was totally untouched by European cultural backgrounds. He was, in short, a typical frontiersman with all of the virtues and most of the faults of the frontier, and his followers loved him for his virtues and faults alike. To them he was the hero of New Orleans, the idol of the West, the spokesman of the "forgotten man;" and they poured into Washington from five hundred miles around to share in his triumph. Frontiersmen, backwoodsmen, and Indian fighters swept down upon the city and took possession of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it. The streets of the capital were crowded with men in coonskin caps and buckskin jackets; men who spat accurately, swore eloquently, and sang loudly the praises of Old Hickory.

Respectable Washington was scandalized. Jefferson's inauguration smacked of revolution, but this was sheer anarchy. The well-born sadly shook their heads and spoke darkly of the descent of the barbarians upon ancient Rome. The only uniformed light infantry company in the District refused to escort Jackson to the Capitol, and again an outgoing President, John Quincy Adams this time, refused to participate in the inauguration of his successor. Happily, the retiring President's discourtesy was scarcely noticed by Jackson's eager admirers. They had come to Washington to see Andrew Jackson, not John Quincy Adams, and on inauguration morning they gathered ten thousand strong before the east portico of the Capitol to cheer on the proceedings.

As he had done many times before, John Marshall administered the oath of office. Jefferson had been the first President he had sworn in, Jackson was destined to be the last — a peculiar situation for the aged jurist, whose whole life had been a protest against the principles of these two men.

The ceremony ended, the General mounted his horse to proceed to the White House, and the whole crowd followed him. In resolute phalanx it surged up Pennsylvania avenue, it pushed into the executive grounds, it pressed into the White House through all the doors, and when these were blocked, it poured in at the windows. Aristocrats of the old school were horrified at the desecration. A judge of the Supreme Court described it as a crowd of "statesmen and stable-boys, white people and black, I never saw such a mixture. The reign of King

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mob seemed triumphant." Another onlooker was disgusted to see "a stout black wench eating in this free country a jelly with a gold spoon at the President's house."

When the refreshments of orange punch were served, it nearly brought down the house. Waiters with loaded trays were trampled under foot. In their eagerness to be served, men in muddy boots leaped on satin-covered chairs, overturned tables, and pulled draperies from their hangings. Jackson himself was glad to escape through a window. He had faced the Indians at Horseshoe Bend, the British at New Orleans, the Spaniards in Florida, but he had never encountered anything like this.

Peace was not restored until tubs of punch had been placed around on the lawn to lure the more bibulous out of doors. When it was all over, the White House looked as though it had been through a tornado. The damage to glassware, furniture, rugs and draperies totalled several thousand dollars, but who cared? It was, in the words of an enthusiastic participant "the people's day, the people's President, and the people would rule."

THE most grimly solemn of all inaugurations was that of Abraham Lincoln in 1861. When he took the oath of office, seven southern states had already seceded, the Confederate States of America had been set up, the whole fabric of the Union seemed to be crumbling beneath his feet.

There was no place for inaugural festivity. Indeed, it was freely predicted that Lincoln would not live to take the oath of office.

Only a few days before, the President-elect had been smuggled into Washington under cover of darkness in order to foil an assassination plot — a humiliating

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

episode which brought forth a gleeful, if not strictly factual, Southern parody:

> Abe Lincoln tore through Baltimore,
> In a baggage-car with fastened door;
> Fight away, fight away, fight away for Dixie's land.
> And left his wife, alas! alack!
> To perish on the railroad track!
> Fight away, fight away, fight away for Dixie's land.

Extraordinary precautions were taken to safeguard the life of the incoming executive. The military escort, for the first time in inaugural history, was there for protection and not for show. The carriage in which Lincoln and Buchanan rode was preceded by a company of infantry, with double files of cavalry on either side, and another company of infantry in the rear. Sharpshooters were posted in windows and on roofs along the line of march. Other troops were stationed upon the steps of the east portico, and an artillery unit stood close by, with guns trained upon the crowd. Over all this martial display rose the unfinished dome of the present Capitol, which secessionists now predicted never would be completed.

The scene at the inauguration ceremony was a dramatic one. Upon the platform were personified all the elements of the slavery controversy of the previous ten years. The oath of office was administered by Chief Justice Taney, by the irony of fate as staunch an upholder of the slave system as one could hope to find. Standing beside the incoming President was Stephen A. Douglas of debate fame, the man whom Lincoln had just defeated for the presidency. Finally, there was Lincoln himself, whose "house divided against itself" assertion was now finding vindication in the tide of events.

The grim ceremony was enlightened by only one less tragic interlude. That was when Lincoln arose to deliver

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his inaugural address and found himself visibly troubled as to where to deposit his shiny new top hat. He could not stand covered in the presence of the multitude, nor could he wave it in the air to punctuate his discourse. It was too new and shiny to be casually dropped upon the floor. At this critical moment, Senator Douglas, the Little Giant of Illinois, proved that a man's stature is not always the true measure of his greatness. He stepped forward, relieved his rival of his impediment, and held it throughout the address.

Lincoln's inaugural address had been awaited with breathless anticipation, for in it might lie the issue of peace or war. The tone of the speech was gentle and conciliatory, but firm. The new President declared that he had just taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and that this oath compelled him to enforce the nation's laws in all parts of an indivisible country. Less than that he could not do, but for his part there should be no bloodshed or violence unless forced upon him from without. To the South he offered forgiveness and reconciliation, declaring that the momentous issue of civil war lay in their hands, not in his.

Lincoln's first inauguration was the most critical in the nation's history, but it was his second that will be remembered longer than any other. It came just before the close of the Civil war. General Sherman's victorious army had finished its famous march to the sea; General Grant was pushing steadily forward to the final chapter at Appomattox. After four years of devastating conflict, the end was at last in sight. Amidst an atmosphere of solemn thanksgiving, Abraham Lincoln stood for a second time upon a platform at the eastern portico of the Capitol and took the oath of office as President of the United States. Then in a clear voice, which sometimes

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trembled with emotion, President Lincoln read the greatest inaugural ever delivered. It was the masterly plea of a great soul who could come through four years of bitter war and still face the task of reconstruction "with malice towards none, with charity for all."

SINCE the Civil war, there have been many unusual inauguration ceremonies. There was, for instance, the inauguration of Rutherford B. Hayes, following the disputed presidential election of 1876. There had been persistent rumors that the Democrats, angered by what they considered the theft of the election, would march one hundred thousand strong upon the capital to prevent the ceremony by force. As a precaution, therefore, Hayes was sworn in secretly in the Red room of the White House at seven o'clock on the evening of March 3. The expected disturbances did not materialize, and the usual public ceremony was held at the appointed time. We will leave it to the Constitutional hair-splitters to debate whether for the space of seventeen hours the United States enjoyed the luxury of two presidents.

The inauguration of William Howard Taft will also be long remembered, for it ran head on into the worst blizzard of inaugural history. Pennsylvania avenue was inches deep in a soft snow which quickly turned to indescribable slush. The wind was a roaring gale that left no umbrella unturned. Special trains, loaded with thwarted merrymakers were stalled in drifts miles from the city. The inaugural parade was held as scheduled, but the ceremony itself was driven indoors for the first time since John Quincy Adams took the oath in 1825. It was the consensus of the wind-lashed, snow-beaten, slush-soaked spectators that the blizzard had won at least a moral victory. Immediately after the ceremony, ex-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

President Theodore Roosevelt left for the station on his way to hunt big game in Africa, while, as somebody remarked, the Democrats all stayed home and hoped that every lion would do its duty.

To many a gray haired spectator, President Wilson's second inauguration might well have brought back long buried memories of 1861. Again the country was upon the verge of war, and again extraordinary precautions were taken for the protection of the President. Once more, riflemen lined the roof tops, and guns were trained upon the crowd on the Capitol plaza. Armored cars and motor-cycle machine gun squads gave a grimly martial aspect to the inaugural parade. The President's carriage — it was the last inauguration to use the traditional horse-drawn conveyance — proceeded from White House to Capitol within a hollow square of armed men. Although the President's inaugural message still clutched at peace, he and his hearers knew that war must come. Reading between the solemn lines, few could miss the glint of steel or the tread of marching men.

It is curious that it should have remained for the twentieth century to provide the simplest and homeliest of all American inaugurations, that of Calvin Coolidge, when he was awakened one midnight in his father's home at Plymouth, Vermont, to learn that President Harding was dead. It was deemed desirable that the Vice President assume the higher office immediately, and the text of the official oath was hurriedly wired from Washington for that purpose. So it came about that Calvin Coolidge was sworn in as President, not by a Chief Justice of the United States, but by his aged father, a notary public, using the family Bible; not in the full glare of the noonday sun, but in the early morning hours, by the flickering gleam of a kerosene lamp; not beneath the resplendent

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dome of the nation's Capitol, but in a simple farm dwelling, just across the road from the house in which he was born; not in the presence of an acclaiming multitude of strangers, but before a small group of awe-struck neighbors, peering in through the open door.

Most dramatic of all recent inaugurations, however, was that of Franklin D. Roosevelt on March 4, 1933. There were several factors which helped to give this ceremony an outstanding significance. Thanks to the twentieth amendment, it would be the last inauguration held upon the historic fourth of March; with it that ungainly specimen of political ornithology, the lame duck, would become mercifully extinct. Then, too, it was the first Democratic inauguration in sixteen years, and the people of Washington were downright curious to see what a Democrat looked like after all that time. Moreover, the recent attempt to assassinate the President-elect was only too clearly in the mind of all. Lest history might repeat itself, a bulletproof reading desk was a startling and disquieting addition to the inaugural scene.

Above all else, however, it was the gravity of the economic crisis which gave the inauguration its intense drama. In the closing hours of the Hoover administration, the nation's whole banking structure suddenly decided to fall apart. In state after state, every bank had closed its doors. A few days more and banking would have become an obsolete profession. And if the banks collapsed, everything else would be dragged down in the general ruin — manufactures, agriculture, railroads and insurance companies.

The American people were just about demoralized. The financial structure of the Republic was crumbling. The monetary streams of the nation had suddenly ceased to flow; the price of a car ride had become a major invest-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment; the making of a phone call was an adventure in high finance. Such was the panic-stricken background upon which Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the burdens of the presidency. As he took the oath, most of the adult population of the United States was within hearing on the radio. And with the nation's banking structure in ruins, the President's inaugural message was no mere pleasing exercise in rhetoric.

It is scarcely necessary, so soon afterwards, to recall in detail Roosevelt's first inaugural address. It was brief and general in its terms; it proposed no specific policies, no concrete course of action; but it offered what in the prevailing temper of the country was better than either — a definite pledge of leadership. A stricken, bewildered people welcomed its memorable closing lines: "The people of the United States have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Those Foolish Leaves

ELIZABETH MORROW

How long ago we pinned those leaves! God stood
Against the light and thundered forth His wrath:
We groveled in first fear, and neither could
Answer His anger, so we sought the path
Out of the Garden . . . then the Angel came . . .
Those foolish leaves! We are grown rich and wise,
Finding a hundred ways to hide our shame,
A thousand shapes to shield us from His eyes.
Now all our cities overtop His world
We heed no tale of serpent or of sin:
Our fruitful valleys mock the curse He hurled;
There is no place we may not prosper in —
Save Eden with barred gate. . . . Let us return,
Knowing the Flaming Sword has ceased to burn.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our Native Humor

SCULLEY BRADLEY

A PAINSTAKING scholar recently classified 30,000 jokes in pigeonholes, finding that there were only thirty original jokes (which was more than one would suspect). Afterwards, he discovered another, and he had to rearrange the entire lot in thirty-one categories. This was probably a useful enterprise, but simple folk, who prefer their laughter undiluted, are inclined to seek another pigeonhole for the critic.

Yet humor, of all human qualities, lies closest to the heart. Other animals share with man the ability to think, but not that highest perception of the intellect which flowers into laughter. The true nature of an individual is revealed by what makes him laugh. If Lucrezia Borgia ever smiled, no one has remembered it, but the laughter of the wise and good, of the Buddhas and the Shakespeares, is immortalized in bronze or in their own words.

As with individuals, so with nations — the collective laughter of a race will reveal its most secret qualities. It is not simply accident that has given each nation a distinctive humor. Above the bed-rock of universal humor, the common heritage of mankind and understood everywhere, lies the top-soil formed by the erosion of national life. Humor is deeper and more fertile in the United States than in some less fortunate places. Critics are just beginning to see it as an important key to our national character. To understand its spiritual sources is to comprehend more fully the American attitudes revealed in the sober pursuit of our daily lives, and in our language, literature, and art.

The common origins of the English and the earlier

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American cultures have produced certain similarities in humorous points of view. Since the Anglo-Saxon is always a moralist, the laughter both of England and America is prevailingly corrective. Yet there is an important difference; the corrective laughter of England is satiric; that of America is ironic. The British laugh at a thing for being so ridiculously what it is; Americans are more prone to be laughing because the thing is not what it should be, or what they expected it would be. This American attitude was demonstrated, years ago, by the wide currency of stories about the Ford car. And after that remarkable machine had achieved a perfection beyond humor, our typical jokes fastened themselves upon certain blond or platinum personalities in Hollywood, and then, more recently, found a perfect subject in the depression. British life offers little parallel for this sort of humor, a blend of admiration or awe with irony.

English humor rejoices in the simple humor of a situation. For instance, when Sheridan learned that the theater which afforded him his livelihood was burning, he repaired with a friend to an alehouse across the street where he watched the destruction over a comforting glass. As their spirits revived, a formal little gentleman at an adjoining table, not recognizing the writer, admonished them sternly for their gaiety "while poor Mr. Sheridan's theatre was burning down."

"Well," said Sheridan, "things are at a pretty pass when a man dare not be merry at his own fireside."

This, of course, is a variation of a universal comic situation, the "downfall of dignity." In its simple form it generally suffices for British humor. When Americans employ it, however, they are tempted to treat it with embellishment or exaggeration which would seem in bad taste to our English cousins. An old American story, for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

example, deals with the corpulent and dignified Senator who sprawled on the icy steps of the Capitol and slid to the bottom. Part way down he encountered a stout lady, who crumpled up helplessly on his chest and rode to the sidewalk below. There the Senator lay panting, "Madam, you will have to get off now; this is the end of my route." Thus a simple and universal comic situation is made American.

Characteristic English humor is defensive, while American humor prefers to strike first. The English enjoy the sudden, defensive brilliance of wit under fire. They do not understand why Americans like to play jokes on the unwary. It does not occur to an Englishman to give his friend a cigar that will explode. The British tell another story of Sheridan which is one of the best examples of defensive wit. As dramatic critic for a periodical, he had praised a play which some spectators had thought to be immoral. An irate lady of sturdy principles wrote a letter to the editor, remarking that for the opinions of such a man she "would not give three skips of a louse." Sheridan published the letter with the comment that, although the language was violent, a woman must always be forgiven for mentioning whatever was going through her head at the moment.

Americans employ such defensiveness, of course, but even more they seem to enjoy the unexpected and unprovoked attack. They tell of the explorer in the jungle who was informed by his wife that a tiger was pursuing his mother-in-law; and "What do I care what happens to a tiger!" replied the explorer. Judged by British standards, this story is in bad taste; in America, it is simply funny. Far reaching differences in social history are responsible for these divergent attitudes.

The national characteristics of American humor are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plainly rooted in the conditions of American life. A people chiefly occupied with the conquest of a wild and unfriendly continent will develop unique attitudes which their humor must represent. The frontier spirit has been the strongest element in our national consciousness for three hundred years. In 1607 the frontier, for Captain John Smith, was Pocahontas in Virginia; in 1900 it was the great Northwest. But as the margin of conquest moved westward it left behind an increasing area of frontier consciousness which survives today even in eastern cities. Frontiersmen must live their lives with the mother of invention. They must be quick and cunning and strong. They must not be taken in by the appearance of things. They will come to value simple integrity of character and homely philosophy. As these attitudes grew in American thought they were reflected in American humor, and they still persist.

A principal trait of American humor is its anti-romanticism. We love to puncture an illusion, to burst an iridescent bubble of hot air. Pretensions of grandeur, false family pride, snobbishness, or conceit annoy us, and we enjoy destroying them with the sharp weapon of irreverence. As a necessary corollary to our anti-romanticism, we have chosen as our most comic figure the "sucker." He is the "goat," the victim of our practical jokes, the romancer who is fooled by the mere surface of things. At different periods he was the tenderfoot who walked blithely into an Indian ambush, the fool who thought he could go up in a balloon, the loon who believed a carriage would run without a horse, the apprentice who runs to fetch a left-handed monkey wrench or a bucket of steam, the sucker who "bites" on the leading question, or the simple soul who is taken in by those odd novelties, decent and otherwise, in which American

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

merchants do a thriving business just before the first of April. The more easily the American "sucker" may be "taken," the funnier he is.

Reflect upon the origins of all this in pioneer life. From the time of Columbus onward, European publicity men and real-estate brokers painted alluring pictures of America in the effort to induce colonization and stimulate trade. The land flowed with milk and honey, gold lay in lumps on the ground, and wild game obligingly came into the settlements to be shot. As late as 1880, according to the story, an Irish immigrant, leaving the immigrant station in New York, saw a blind beggar standing outside, with a ten dollar gold-piece glittering at his feet. Stooping down, Pat tossed the coin into the beggar's cup with the remark that "the poor divil couldn't see thim fer himself."

Whether in New York in 1880 or in Virginia in 1607, the expectations of the immigrant were to receive a rude shock. The Indians were not noticeably friendly, the game was unaccountably shy, the trees were tough and the gold turned out to be chiefly iron pyrites. A family of settlers would pole a raft laboriously up the mammoth tides of the Mississippi or Missouri, past the forlorn settlements, looking for a place less muddy and unfriendly. At last, finding it all to be the same, they would choose a spot and build a log house. In three weeks of perspiring toil they would achieve a romantic dream of abode. Then one night, just as the new mansion was nearly completed, the floods would descend, the river would capriciously change its course, and the house would become an island, if indeed it did not float off toward the gulf.

Experiences of this nature were the common lot of our forefathers. If you could not laugh at this or at yourself in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the role of the sucker, you were doomed. And the laughter grew. It became a national trait. Such anti-romanticism is a fundamental quality of our typical humorists, writers like Mark Twain, for instance, whose *Petrified Man* is as characteristic a story as we have. It deals with a party of silver miners in Nevada. They have labored across the continent and up the steep hills. They have sweated fruitlessly through many veins of pure quartz, with no trace of silver. At last they strike something different. They do not understand it, but hope springs high. For days they labor to uncover the curious object. At last it is revealed, a gigantic petrified man. There he had been sitting hundreds of years, facing eastward toward the oncoming pioneers, his nose and thumb cooperating "in the immemorial gesture of derision."

This story is almost a perfect pattern for the anti-romantic American story. It was a fertile field for Davy Crockett, Petroleum Nasby, Artemus Ward, John Phoenix and almost every other early American humorist. It is a principal characteristic in our humorous fiction. It is a fundamental American stamp on the work of such contemporary writers as Dorothy Parker, Ogden Nash, Robert Benchley, or Clarence Day. In John Phoenix, for example, the anti-romantic climax emerges exuberantly in the case of the ingenious surveyor who invented a pedometer for measuring distances in road building. The instrument had a neat dial which was hung on the "seat of the pants," and a long rod attached to the knee. Unfortunately the surveyor stopped at a tavern for some frontier whiskey, and in the next ten miles achieved a speedometer reading which suggested a transcontinental journey. When a bottle of Phoenix' hair tonic was accidentally broken on a marble step, a doormat grew up at once. In our modern humorists there is only a change of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

setting; the principle of anti-climax is retained. A typical heroine of Dorothy Parker has looked forward to a certain dance as a big moment of her life. She is carefully dressed for the advent of Prince Charming. Suddenly her garter snaps and her stocking begins to slither down. To her horror she finds that she is on the side of the room remote from the haven of feminine repair. She spends the evening as a gloomy wallflower, holding her knee, waiting for the guests to leave, with thoughts of such brilliant ineptitude as only Mrs. Parker can master. Clarence Day's *Father* was a master of the anti-romantic conclusion. Stephen Leacock thrives upon it, as for instance in *My Financial Career*, in which a "simple soul" goes crazy opening his first bank account. Anti-romantic expectation is so deeply rooted in our national consciousness that even today, in any part of the country, the current slang of "So what?" or "Oh, yeah?" are conclusive if impolite remedies for inflated illusions.

Contemporary writers still employ frontier irreverence. Ogden Nash's *Quartet for Prosperous Love-Children* ("the banker, the broker, the Washington joker," and the Forgotten Man) coming pat upon the inevitable moment in national politics, was convincing proof that the appeal of irreverence is as strong now as it was when Major Jack Downing poked fun at President Jackson, or when Abe Lincoln kept thirty important political leaders waiting while he read to Sumner the satiric remarks on politicians from the pen of Petroleum V. Nasby, or when Will Rogers, in *Letters of a Self-Made Diplomat*, addressed President Coolidge by cable as Calcool, or called the United States senate "just a cheap club that ninety-six men belong to, and pay no dues." This sort of thing will naturally give pain to British critics, one of whom recently reviewed Ogden Nash as a poet who might pro-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

duce important work if he could learn the use of rhyme.

Another element noted in our humor by the critical is its endless capacity for exaggeration. To this the English have impolitely referred as the habit "of telling a lie and laughing at the person who believes it." This disparagement may indicate a natural resentment on the part of the British. Again and again, stories from American newspapers and magazines, which no American was intended to believe and which passed as good hoaxes at home, have been reprinted in England as the solemn truth. There was the story, out of a frontier newspaper in Nevada, of the invention of "solar armor," a refrigerating device intended for use in crossing the great southern deserts; and how its inventor, neglecting to turn off the refrigerator at the proper time, had been found frozen to death. English papers reprinted this, with grave comments on the usefulness of such an invention for the British army in the tropics. This sort of episode has continually embarrassed our foreign diplomacy.

Actually, the exaggeration in our humor has the same cultural sources as our anti-romanticism. Probably the first settlers who ever wrote letters home began the practice. Many of them had come over against the earnest advice of family and friends and they all were anxious, above all else, to make good. Children who have left home against their parents' wishes are notoriously unreliable in reporting their adventures; and young wives who have made questionable marriages are given to the public praise of their husbands. Just so, we may imagine, the new settlers tried to enhance the attractiveness of their new situation. The letters home passed into literature as books about the new country. Captain John Smith, as early as 1608, began his remarkable series of publications about Virginia, and today their charm as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

literature rests chiefly on the quaint exaggerations which render them wholly unreliable as history. As late as 1778 the same attitude was still prevalent among writers on the new country. In that year one Samuel Peters, a clergyman, published a *History of Connecticut* which reads as though some portions of it had been written by Sir John Mandeville's ghost. The rapids of the Connecticut river, for instance, were said to be so swift that an iron crowbar would float there.

Another powerful impulse to exaggeration was the worship of strength and size which were principal requisites for survival in forest and frontier life. The traditional exploits of the frontiersman are unblushingly exaggerated for humorous effect. He could run down a deer. He had killed a bear so big that he could not carry the pelt. Davy Crockett told of shooting an eye through the head of a weathercock across the Ohio river. At the same distance he punctured a pail of milk which a girl was carrying on her head. Bill Merriweather lost his brother in an extraordinary manner. During a drenching rain his new deerskin breeches shrank so rapidly that he was shot high into the air and never was seen again. Paul Bunyan, at the age of two, built Niagara Falls for a cold shower.

Fishermen and huntsmen even today preserve the frontier tradition, and an allusion to "the one that got away" will always provoke a knowing wink. Sporting magazines unblushingly conduct a Liar's Club while the amalgamated reformers are undisturbed by this menace to the public virtue.

Indeed, the "tall story" was highly regarded in early American life. Such yarns were repeated until they constituted a native folk-lore; they were reprinted in the newspapers as a regular branch of journalism from the Jacksonian era until long after the Civil war. They in-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spired a school of fiction which flourished for a half-century. The adventures of Simon Suggs, Major Jones or Sut Lovingood are unfamiliar now, and such authors as Longstreet, Baldwin, Thorpe, and W. T. Thompson have passed from memory, but they were the popular literature of the generation of Mark Twain. It is natural, therefore, that exaggeration should leaven every anecdote in *Roughing It* or *Tom Sawyer;* or that *A Connecticut Yankee* should be a tall tale of Arthurian times.

The tall story survives exuberantly today in our daily conversation, in our jokes, in the anecdotes which we so shamelessly tell about our friends. Our speech is full of absurd "gags" which we continuously employ. The one about the man so tall that he had to climb a ladder to shave himself is very old, but one recently heard of the professor so absent-minded that he put his trousers to bed and hung himself over a chair-back where he froze to death. Any reader can add a score of such current oddities. And recently one of the most popular features on the American radio was Baron Munchausen who fascinated millions of auditors every week by the monstrous audacity of his lies. It seems unlikely that this could have occurred in any other country.

Two principal elements of American humor have been indicated. It is interesting to see exaggeration and anti-romantic irreverence joining forces to give the typical American quality to Mark Twain's work. A certain heroine, he said, was "virtuous to the verge of eccentricity." "In this chapel," wrote the Innocent, "were the ashes of St. John. We had seen St. John's ashes before, in another church. We could not bring ourselves to think St. John had two sets of ashes." Romantic Italy proved to be a place where you couldn't get a bath. "Each of us had an Italian farm on his back. We could have felt

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

affluent if we had been officially surveyed and fenced in." The coyote of the Western plains proved to be not a noble wolf, but "a living, breathing allegory of want, . . . and even the fleas would desert him for a velocipede." Mark Twain's enduring popularity rests in large measure upon his ability to make immortal use of the qualities which differentiate our native character.

Today these are still the principal traits of our humorists. I have before me one of those omnibus volumes of contemporary mischief containing nearly a hundred widely varied pieces from pens of such writers as Lardner, Benchley, Leacock, Sullivan, Nash, Thurber, Stewart, and Mrs. Parker. Almost every one of these sketches achieves its quality and strength through the same combination. "I was a poor little girl born in a tenement and my mother and father used to be drunk all the time and beat me so I grew up to be sweet and pure and beautiful." . . . "Only an expert can tell a live Penguin from a stuffed one. It is probable that most Penguins are stuffed." . . . "Children are embarrassed to have their parents along when they are attending certain movies or plays. A child never knows at what point in a play his uninformed old father will start to giggle." . . . "I knew if I came to this dinner, I'd draw something like this baby on my left. I should have stayed at home. I could have had something on a tray. The head of John the Baptist, or something." These quotations fall at random from various parts of the volume, and they all bear the same stamp. It is not so much the tradition of Mark Twain as it is the democracy of frontier laughter amid the sophistication of New York city today.

Finally, our humor is distinguished by homeliness. This, again, is the result of our homespun past. It has a blunt directness, learned along gunsights. It preserves the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

laconic reflectiveness of wide and lonely vistas. It is the philosophy of the countless crossroads stores that dotted the countryside a few years ago. The bustling towns sprung up around the old Corners have not forgotten the circle of chairs about the wood-stove at night, the box of sawdust with its brown stains, and the slow wisdom. It is as though the shrewd commonsense of *Poor Richard* had been sharpened to laughter by adversity. Our most typical humor still preserves the vernacular and seldom employs the balanced brilliance of wit. Across the pages of our social history moves an array of characters with linsey-woolsey names — Jack Downing, Hosea Biglow, Petroleum Nasby, Bill 'Arp, Artemus Ward, Josh Billings, Mr. Dooley, and many others. They have made our humor as characteristically American as the California redwoods or a baseball game.

Courage and necessity were the original sources of our especial variety of humor. It lined the faces of men and women who were crossing prairies, and conquering forests, and building cities. It may be that with all its strength it is a bit boisterous. Perhaps it lacks refinement or finish according to British standards. But if we were free to choose, we should probably prefer the American variety. As Mr. Dooley said, "a man can be r-right an' be the President, but he can't be both at the same time."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The American Credo

RICHARD S. REYNOLDS

I face the sunrise. I turn my back
And forget the past. My tomorrow
Shall not be trampled, trodden
By the heavy hoofs of yesterday.
My dead must bury its dead.

I defy precedent. I prove
The impossible. I am God's answer
To the smug and the commonplace.
Unbroken, untamed and unafraid,
I challenge custom, I welcome change.

I abhor the beaten path. Not for me
The cowbell or the curfew.
I shun the paved road strung
With warning signs and safety signals.
I question the dark. I confront the dawn.

I recoil in impatient fear
From the chilly caverns of caution.
When I am numbered with the missing
You will find my bones in the sun,
Both arms outstretched toward Tomorrow!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Connecticut Attic

WINIFRED WELLES

EVEN IF that space at the top of the house were completely bare the imaginative child could store it full of her own dreams. The roof-sounds alone, so faintly and unevenly woven, are as different from the resonances in the rooms below as a cobweb is from checked gingham. And only a child's hand knows the quality of the texture in a band of light laid in through a dim window, the glint of dust particles floating across it.

But the Connecticut attic that I knew was not an empty one. Someone's old doll lay there, and a rusty sword. A bride's bouquet crumbled to dust in a box, and nearby, where it had been set on a shelf neatly tied up in a package, was the groom's hat. In a square trunk were dresses worn by a belle of the 'seventies: pale pink and blue brocades, with bustles, and pearl trimmings on the bodices, deep colored velvets with long trains, and gleaming satins with vests of lace. In the tray of the trunk lay a feather fan with pearl sticks, and a small black lace parasol, the ivory handle delicately carved. To complete this gay chapter in her life, as I afterwards learned downstairs, there should have been one additional item which was missing — a pair of slippers with the heels stripped off. She had a devoted but jealous beau, evidently a serious fellow, who not only writhed at the sight of her dancing with other men, but disapproved of the idea of her dancing altogether. So, after what must have been a high-pitched scene, he stole a pair of her slippers, tore off the heels, and left them in a reproachful little heap outside her door. I used to wonder where they were. Had she thrown them away chagrined? Or did she indignantly

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bear them off to the shoemaker's to be repaired and end their days in the polka?

Another trunk held the children's clothes, the hemstitched lawn bonnets, the woolen petticoats with scalloped edges, and the long, embroidered robes of infancy. Some of these things had their stories too, like that one of the little boy just old enough in the year 1849 to say plaintively, "I want a new pair of boots, a pair that *squeaks*!" There they were in the attic, but with no squeak.

About the year 1890, another little boy had a suit with a jacket trimmed with brass buttons, and kilts, which were worn over a pair of trousers to match. The boys at school made fun of his kilts and called them skirts, but his mother admired them very much. On his way to school there was a tunnel, where the brook ran under the street. There he used to leave the kilts, proceeding on his way in his trousers, and on his return dressing himself again in the kilts, and so home to mother. The whole suit, looking hardly worn, particularly the kilts, had been cherished and put away in the attic.

How many times they must have said, after the ball, the wedding, the christening, the funeral; "What shall we do with this?" And the answer appears always to have been the same. "Ah well, put it away in the attic."

One boy who went to school and college in the 1850's occasionally wrote his mother a short, laconic note. Evidently she was too proud of him for his own comfort, and when he learned that she had taken these letters to her sewing-circle, he penned her this fierce threat, "If you show any more of my letters to your friends, I shall never write you again as long as I live!"

From time to time in a small notebook he had jotted down odd epitaphs, collected from other boys or possibly from solitary wanderings in old burying-grounds. The

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

following must have been his favorite as he had set it down twice:

> Here lies the body of Jacob Geer,
> Whose mouth extended from ear to ear,
> Stranger, step lightly on this sod,
> For if he gapes, you're gone by God.

A girl in the 'seventies, who went to a seminary in New Haven, had kept several epistles written to her by her schoolmates shortly before her marriage. By that time they had all been out of school for some years, but judging by their words, they still kept a strict faith in the high value of spinsterhood. Some of them reproached her so passionately for her decision to become a wedded woman, that she must have shuddered at the implications in their phrases. At that period, it seems, matrimony was not a beginning or even an end. It was the End. And among these tearful salutations of farewell lay a faded photograph, which showed all the young ladies of the seminary playing croquet on the lawn in hats and gloves.

During the early 1830's, a widow wrote now and then to her son. He was a young man studying law while he supported himself by teaching in the Bacon Academy in Colchester. This is now just a ride from Norwich, but then it was a journey. His laundry went back and forth on the stage, and in that package she often sent him home-made bread and cake, and perhaps a joint of cooked meat. These additions to his fare were not a luxury but something of a necessity. This she evidently considered humiliating for them both, and often besought him not to speak of such matters to anyone. She also constantly reminded him to take care of his teeth, because "the mouth is so important for an orator." In her youth this same lady had visited in Charleston, South Carolina, where she

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had been unsuccessfully wooed by a young minister. She seemed to cherish his remembrance for she had not destroyed all traces of his rather arch admiration. His missives addressed her resoundingly as "Divine Empress of my Soul's Affections."

Under the eaves, amid a heap of packing cases, there was a small haircloth trunk, its rounded top studded with brass nails. It contained packets of letters, neatly arranged according to date, from the nineteen-year-old boy who had died in the battle of Antietam. With the letters, according to the morbid sentiment of the time, was the bullet which had given him his fatal wound. On the cover his mother had written in her delicate Victorian hand, "the Minnie Ball that killed my son."

That soldier's letters laid on my heart so keen a personal emotion about the Civil war that it seemed like no other war ever waged on earth.

"Where's Sister?" my brother Sam would ask, and Ned, the other one, would reply, "Aw, she's up in the attic bawling over the Civil war." They never saw that soldier as I did. They had their own heroes in the family past, like Philemon Hale, the privateer in the War of 1812, who gave his crew a mixture of rum and gunpowder before attacking a British vessel, or Sam's namesake, Samuel Adgate, the Revolutionary surgeon. So the Civil war soldier, his letters, and his memory, became my own. He had seen the dead on the battlefields, and "they all had terrible wounds." The other soldiers after battles, were "taking trophies," but "my conscience won't let me," he wrote. And in putting off his mother's evidently often repeated plea to have his picture taken, he replied sheepishly, "Perhaps I'll be a captain. Then you know I shall have a forky old pair of shoulder straps, and a picture will look gay."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He wrote a grim little vignette of a fallen enemy. "In the fort, just behind the embrasure, was the body of a Rebel Lieutenant. He was young and very handsome. He had on nice fine underclothes, and they were as neat as wax. They were marked W. D. Seldon, 'Richmond Blues.' His pockets were turned inside out, his gold watch gone, part of the chain alone remaining, and some vandal had carried the joke so far as to cut off his goatee." Looking down on that other dead boy did the writer have the slightest foreboding that he saw himself, his own stripped body, like a reflection in a blood-stained mirror? "You must stop worrying about me, my dear Mother," he wrote, "There is not the slightest danger of my being killed." And so all that, too, was "put away in the attic."

The books over on the shelves by the door were an assortment, including almost everybody's primers and grammars, English, Latin, French and Greek. There were bibles, of course, ranging in size from one no bigger than your thumb to one so large that you clasped it in both arms when you carried it across to the window to read. On the flyleaf, in bold, black handwriting, was a man's name, the year 1629, and the words Essex, England. The other big books, bound in worn leather, were an Apocrypha with engravings, and several volumes of the laws of early Connecticut with very stately lettering. There were sermons and treatises and Sunday-school books. There was a grimly illustrated medical history of the Civil war, in which you could see for yourself, if you had doubted it, that "they all had terrible wounds." And there were collections of stories and legends about Norwich, New London, Lyme, Saybrook, and the lesser hamlets like Yantic, Bean Hill, Bozrahville, Colchester, Lebanon, Moodus, Windham.

You could learn that Norwich was once called the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLIC LIBRARY
NEWARK, OHIO

Rose of New England, that she was famous for the size of her puddings, while New London was noted for that of her dumplings. You could sit puzzled for some time wondering what it would have meant to be a guest at tripe suppers, turtle entertainments, or the ordination parties, where the clergy displayed such enthusiasm and skill in making punch. But those meditative moments were the mild ones. You read faster when you came to stories of wolves in the swamps around New London, or the Indians, those far cleverer wild creatures, who were everywhere. There were those two chiefs that you never forgot, shrewd Uncas, and the other with his lovely rippling name, Miantonomo. Those two hated and feared and admired one another for a long time, but it was Uncas, who, with the help of the English, won out in the end. And proud of his victory, he was no less proud of his enemy, for as he stood over the body of the slain Miantonomo, he drew out his long knife, and slicing off pieces of the still warm flesh he ate it and said, "It is good. It is sweet. It will make my heart strong."

Sometimes you ran across descriptions of Indian customs that somehow reminded you of pictures of Egyptian sculpture — the way one tribe had of burying a brave and his squaw together in a circular grave, standing upright in the earth, facing each other, with a bowl of succotash between their feet.

It was somewhat disappointing to find that only one witch had been hung in Connecticut. But she haunted you because she was only a girl, and her name, Alse, suggested nothing evil. And altogether, she, the wolves, and the Indian chiefs seemed as mythical to read about as some of the records left as to the behaviour of Nature itself in the various townships, as, for instance, the mountain in Moodus that "made noises," or "the rock that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

walked" on the shore near New London, or the island up the Connecticut river that "quietly vanished away."

As a contrast to all this wild, dark, mysterious poetry, there were later more substantial figures like Sarah Knight, a very lively lady, who settled down at Norwich. Early in the eighteenth century she journeyed through New England keeping a journal as she went. Apparently equally afraid of a "hors" or a "cannoo," she nevertheless managed to traverse much earth and water. Among many observant comments on people and towns she mentioned divorces — "Stand Aways" she called them — and considered them entirely "too much in vougue," both among the English and the Indians. Sometimes, in trying moments, she found it restful to set down her thoughts in verse. Her phrase for this was "Composing my Resentments," and she resorted to it late one night in a Connecticut tavern, when some quarrelsome topers in the room next to hers, kept her too long awake. She lit her candle in despair and wrote:

> I ask thy aid, O potent Rum,
> To charm these wrangling Topers dum.
> Thou hast their Giddy Brains possesst,
> The man confounded with the Beast —
> And I, poor I, can get no rest.
> Intoxicate them with thy fumes,
> O still their Tongues till morning comes!

The charm worked, for she added that "the dispute soon ended with 'tother dram."

Naturally the attic had no scholarly feeling for the sequence of events. On those shelves the decades and the centuries all gathered dust impartially together. I, the contented living child ran my exploring hand along the rows of books. If I was interested one minute to think of Lady Fenwick and her crumbling grave on the shore at

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Saybrook, I was equally so the next to imagine the Duc de Lauzun, that elegant French nobleman, sulking in the village of Lebanon and longing for the gayety of Newport. That a hundred years and more, brimful of other lives and events, stretched between this lady and this gentleman would not have disconcerted me very much even had I happened to count them. In the attic history shrank, but the lives, as I came upon them, seemed distinct and important, each in its own niche. And the place was so cluttered that it took my mind no longer to dart across the decades, and even from war to war, than it took my eyes to glance from the Union soldier's sword to the cedarlined medicine chest, which had belonged to the Revolutionary doctor.

Perhaps the fact that some of my own discarded toys had found their resting-place up here too may have assured me that all the other objects in some way belonged to me as well. My own old dollhouse with one door off, standing as it did beside a broken spinning-wheel, perhaps gave me the impression that one was really no more unfamiliar than the other. Both were companions in disuse, that was all. I never seemed to question why either had been saved. A child, wandering among such outcast but still surviving fragments of other times, other lives, sees herself not as an isolated figure, shelterless and undirected, but as a partaker, a marcher in a long processional, which has passed under this, her very own roof. Death is diminished for her and life enlarged. For better or for worse, the incidents of her own hearth reach out and merge in the events of her country's history.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nightingales

LEONORA SPEYER

THE HOUR

What is the sound?
No thrush!
Too dark the sky, the ground,
Too deep the bush.

This is the hour
When birds are still,
Winds hush;
Over the hill
A star blooms like a flower.

What is the sound?
Half-sob, half-trill,
Soft as a kiss,
Relentless as a wound?

Nightingales wake:
To fill,
To rend,
The quiet air.

Who listening shall bear
The weight, the ache
Of this?
Surely the bough must bend,
The heart must break.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SINGERS

Shall the lonely singers
Not sing together now,
With the same breath:
The one upon,
The one beneath
The bough?

Shall the song not be the same
(Though not the sound),
As ash and flame
Are one;
The note that falters,
The note so ripe, so round?

Darkness is but a mellow orchard
Of wild birds' singing,
Cadence on cadence,
Abundant fruit
That drips along the night.
Shall the wild heart be mute?
And shall the two not sing together,
The laureate and that other,
And with the same delight?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOW IS SPREAD

Now is spread
Soft as a silken coverlet
Across the sleeper's bed,
Silence;
Stripped is the wood,
The orchard bare.

Now is laid lightly
On the air,
Soft as a coverlet,
Wider than any cry,
Silence;
The shining notes are gone,
As stars die,
One by one.

Somewhere
A small bird's head
Is tucked beneath a wing.
Who then shall sing,
Who dare?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHAT MATTER?

They took my nightingale away.
They said
It was not he I heard, —
And told me of a large and yellow bird
Too shy to sing by day;
Daring alone at dusk
The opulent, airy strain
That filled my heart
As a dry husk
Grows sudden sweet again.

Too late the year,
Long sped
The wooing of the nightingale,
They said.

But I remember still
How the notes poured and leapt
In a bright, guileless scale,
And how the stars came running out
To hear,
And how a hill drew near;
And how I wept.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Crusade from Santa Fé

ERNA FERGUSSON

THERE is no getting through New Mexico, by whatever route, without running onto the Indian problem. The Indian, at different times a savage to subdue, a little red brother to convert, a government ward to civilize, is now a problem. He is even becoming a problem able to stand on its own feet and make its own fuss, as witness several recent monographs submitted by western tribes, organized and represented by committees to tell Congress what they think of their white guardians. To each age its own Indian.

Literature has provided a lot of Indians. The *Leatherstocking Tales* gave us the noble chief. *Hiawatha* put moonlight and romance into the picture. In *Ramona*, Helen Hunt Jackson first presented the Indian hero tricked and mistreated by the white man. All westerns have had Indians for background. Oliver La Farge's telling picture of a modern gold-digging Navajo girl has been movie-ized for Lupe Velez with brilliant fingernails, furry eyelashes, and a costume designed to bring out every curved seduction.

The national better nature comes at it differently. In the eighties, a group of Philadelphia Quakers founded the Indian Rights Association to watch legislation concerning Indians. They have always been a bit pious, notably when, during the Coolidge administration, their Mr. Sniffen, whom Dickens might have invented for the office, went from New Mexico pueblo to pueblo seeking obscenities. Smut is easy enough to find anywhere if the searcher is determined, and Mr. Sniffen found plenty of small town storekeepers, missionaries, even employees of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Indian Service eager to whisper scandal behind hands raised in horror. There were rumors of a report to the President calculated to appal any Yankee puritan. Nobody knows what happened to those revelations.

Meanwhile New Mexico had been discovered by artists. In frenetic effort to escape the complications of western cities, they were seeking not only the peace of the desert, but the refreshment of primitive life. What a relief to turn from the War and its drives to softly mellowed pueblos where brown men raised what they ate in peace. From feminism, free love, and flaming books to a sanely humorous people who took sex as simply as weather. From anguished searchings for something to replace religions proven sterile, to sunlit ceremonies worshipping nature with both beauty and intensity. Jaded and nerve wracked æsthetes plunged into it as into a refreshing bath. Nothing was too extreme to express their desire to go western, Indian, to live simply, to be part of the country.

Witter Bynner bought and wore and hung on his friends a famous collection of Indian jewelry. Alice Corbin introduced the velvet Navajo blouse. Stetson hats, cowboy boots, flannel shirts, even blankets were the approved costume. Everybody had a pet pueblo, a pet Indian, a pet craft. Pet Indians with pottery, baskets, and weaving to sell were seated by the corner fireplace (copied from the pueblo), plied with tobacco and coffee, asked to sing and tell tales. Jane Henderson made a record by living in Santa Clara all winter and learning a whole repertoire of Indian songs. Mary Austen discovered and ordered her life to the beat of the Amerindian rhythm. Carlos Vierra and Jesse Nusbaum designed the state museum along lines of the pueblo missions: poems and pictures were Indian strained through such diverse

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

personalities as Parsons, Cassidy, Baumann and Nordfeldt. It was obligatory to go to every pueblo dance. Failure to appear on a sunny roof on every saint's day marked one as soulless and without taste.

It is different now. That fine, free, individual frenzy of the artist was caught by the very thing he fled from, the national genius for organization.

Organization began in 1922 when our Senator Holm Bursum introduced a bill into the Senate. The Senator, a sheepman from Socorro County, cannily made no moves as a law-maker without the counsel of certain astute advisors, including his colleague, Senator Albert Bacon Fall. This bill, they told him, merely undertook *to settle land claims of persons not Indians within Pueblo Indian lands*. It passed the Senate and was on its way to the House when somebody in Santa Fé, and in the know, happened to see it. Upon examination it appeared that that innocent seeming bill might well result in settling the Pueblo Indians with no land at all.

This magical pueblo life, so thoroughly integrated, so precious a repository of primitive life and religion, was seriously threatened. Rallying to the slogan "Let's save the Pueblos!" Santa Fé's art colony set out to kill the Bursum bill, by publicity. Never did a more articulate, vociferous, propaganda-minded lobby descend upon the Congress of these United States for any cause.

The output of poems and paintings ceased and pamphlets, studies, reports, and resolutions filled the air. They divided up the press of the country and appealed to editor friends. Alice Corbin Henderson and Elsie Sergeant appeared simultaneously in the *Nation* and the *New Republic*. *Theatre Arts* and the *Christian Science Monitor* carried spreads. Witter Bynner wrote for the *Outlook*. Harvey Ferguson, then a newspaper man in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington, wrote for a capital paper. Mary Austen lent her prestige as the final authority on Indians. Harriet Welles put her short stories aside and produced propaganda. Eugene Manlove Rhodes, shaken out of his sunny dreams of the past, wrote a piece for the Santa Fé *New Mexican.* And that village sheet, what with fiery editorials from Dana Johnson every day, went on sale at Forty-second street and Broadway, and has been ever since.

They still needed weight, push on a national scale, to put behind that keen spear thrust of literate wit. In those days the heaviest battalions were in the women's clubs. And as luck would have it, or the Shiawani, Mabel Sterne, who had not yet married Tony, was entertaining in Taos Mrs. Stella Atwood, chairman of the Indian Welfare Committee of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and an active fellow with long experience in propaganda and Indians, then serving as secretary of Mrs. Atwood's committee. John Collier, keen-faced, quick, highly jittery, impresses one, whatever his actual size as a very small being behind gleaming glasses, darting forever in and out of holes. Taos, as Taos, was not interested. But one of Mabel's soothsayers had told her that she was the destined bridge to span the chasm between the white race and the red; and she offered Mr. Collier. Working with Francis Wilson, a Santa Fé attorney, Mr. Collier prepared a careful analysis of the Bursum bill. Mr. Wilson had for years been United States attorney for the Pueblos, and he knew what he was talking about. This Blue Book, published in Santa Fé, was sent to every member of Congress and distributed all over the country by Mrs. Atwood's committee, and by the Santa Fé Association on Indian Affairs. They were organized by then, and had a name.

There were thousands of claimants to lands originally

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

owned by the pueblos, and they fell into three classes: towns like Taos, settled early in the eighteenth century on invitation of the Indians, who wanted protection against Apaches and Comanches; squatters, some of whom held Indian deeds and some who did not, but had bought the land in good faith from white settlers; and the inevitable bright boys who had found that the government took little note if they moved their fences to include bits of pueblo acreage.

The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo guaranteed the Pueblo Indians their lands held under Spanish grant, and so saved them from such exploitation as Indians suffered in other states. But the federal government, always responsible for the Indians as wards, minors, had been so lax in guarding the interests of the Pueblos that they were in danger of losing more than ninety thousand acres of valuable lands, their principal source of income. The pueblo of San Juan, for instance, supposed to own four thousand acres of irrigable land, was reduced to five hundred and eighty-eight acres, a very poor living for four hundred and thirty people.

The Bursum bill proposed to turn all such disputes over to the state courts, even disputes about water rights, and water is often more important than land. As the valley above a pueblo is settled, the amount of water that flows through ditches made and maintained by Indians for centuries may be dangerously reduced. And in New Mexico no land produces without ditchwater. The bill provided that a survey, made to show what the adverse claims were, should serve as proof that all contested acres belonged to the white claimant, and gave the Indian no right to defend.

Its history was stormy. It and everybody connected with it made the front page. Delegations of Indians went

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to Washington to sit, in colored blankets and inscrutable silence, before the Public Lands Committee, where the bill originated. The New Mexico Association had found a big-sister association back east where the money grows. The social register was heavily represented. The bill was defeated. A substitute bill was side-tracked. In the course of the discussions, John Collier and Francis Wilson fell out. Mr. Collier had his association too; the Indian Defense Association financed by Californians and Chicagoans. At last, after two years of trial and error in Washington, of acrimonious disputes in the peaceful purlieus of Santa Fé, a bill was passed with the benediction of the New Mexico organization. Mr. Collier and the defenders withheld their complete approval.

This bill established the Pueblo Lands Board to consider and settle all adverse claims to pueblo lands. Of the three members, one was a New Mexican, Herbert J. Hagerman, a high-collared aristocrat with diplomatic experience in Imperial Russia, a big ranch in the Pecos valley, a turbulent career as governor of New Mexico, a love of calm and security, an unassailable integrity, a reluctance to fight, and doomed always to be the center of bitter controversy.

The artists, satisfied that the pueblos were saved, yearned to retreat to their quiet adobe studios where the creative spirit reigned. But money was coming from the Eastern Association, and the Indian problem was presenting other phases. They seemed to be in Indian affairs in spite of themselves. Reinforcements, however, were at hand. Santa Fé's newest colony, with leisure and no creative urges, was charmed to keep right on saving the Indians, and certain townspeople were interested. The association grew and steadied. Their Miss McKittrick, acting secretary, was to be found any time anywhere in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Indian country, in a topless Ford and wearing blue jeans, with a conciliatory manner and a cropped head full of incontrovertible facts.

Indian schools, she reported, were atrocious. Little children, browned by centuries of sunshine, were taken from home by compulsion, caged in ugly airless buildings with smelly toilets, underfed, overworked, forced into the rigid mold of an out-moded education, forbidden their own languages and customs, allowed to droop and die of homesickness. Conditions in the pueblos were bad too. Polluted drinking water. Infant mortality beyond all belief. A medical service inefficient at best. Missionaries of opposing faiths fought, almost hand to hand, for converts. Indian ceremonies were discouraged. Indian craft, vital for centuries, was dying of attrition.

Here was reason for battle, and a cause calculated to inflame any artist. Destruction threatened that primitive life which so filled the minds and exalted the spirits of all sensitives who touched it. The enemy, the Indian Service, embodied everything the artist most loathes. Discipline. Formalized education. Religious intolerance. And especially a menace to the extraordinary primitive culture which it was their great office to vitalize in American life. So it was remarkable that the policy adopted was one not of violence, but of cooperation. To work in harmony with the Indian office, pointing out deficiencies in more polite terms than those here used, and offering to finance demonstrations of what might be done.

Several pueblos were supplied with public health nurses who had to combat distrust of white man's magic, indifference of government doctors, distance, and inadequate equipment. The tales those nurses told! And the things they did! Laundries and bath houses appeared. Goats were supplied, and babies and mothers taught the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

uses of a bottle. Windmills came to groan in places where the water was particularly bad. Certain stiff-necked employees were advised to seek other zones of influence. One or two schools, where tuberculosis was stronger than youth, were transformed into hospitals. Dr. F. I. Proctor, famous eye man, offered his services for a study of trachoma, took an Indian service doctor to Europe to study it, even brought the great Noguchi to New Mexico, and interested the Rockefeller Foundation. Trachoma still flourishes, but at least the schools are no longer its best breeding places. As time went on, the harmony between the Indian Service and the Indian Association grew closer through personal friendships. Then Herbert Hagerman was appointed U. S. Commissioner to the Navajos, and his popularity with Santa Féans carried their loyalty over to the government in general. It was a pretty picture, and for dark shadow and a heavy villain there was John Collier.

Mr. Collier's policy was neither cooperation nor conciliation. He was a truculent fighter for whatever could be got or claimed for the Indians, an unrelenting critic of the Indian Service, aggressive, quick to catch a weak point, often violent. Whenever an injustice was done or threatened to the Indians, there was John Collier. Oklahoma and the Cherokee oil lands. Wyoming and a grazing problem. Arizona and the Papagoes. Pueblos in New Mexico. He inspired the Women's Clubs who followed him as one Amazon. Under his guidance the Indian Defense Association adopted the policy of financing legal battles. They engaged a firm of Albuquerque lawyers to watch the deliberations of the Pueblo Lands Board which they suspected of favoring the white squatters against the Indians. There were accusations of unfairness from both sides. Honest differences of opinion

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there certainly were, but personalities reduced them to vindictive scrapping and the only topic of conversation in Santa Fé.

The Pueblo Lands Board began its sittings in 1924, and for seven years it progressed slowly from pueblo to pueblo, hearing testimony in Spanish and Indian dialects, slowly interpreted into English. Attorneys represented individual squatters, and the Indian Defense Association lawyers appeared, armed with authorities from certain Pueblo Councils who stated clearly that they would not be responsible for fees. The awards, as finally made, involved many delicate legal questions, and caused terrific rows. The Board granted certain sums for lost lands and specifically excluded water on the ground that the Indian's water rights were inalienable and could not be paid for, water being always more valuable than money. The Indian Defense Association, watching every award, contended and still contends that the Indians, who had lost their lands in the first place through government indifference, were still defrauded. They demanded compensation for water as well as land. They carried several cases into federal courts, where they were lost.

The battle extended, inevitably, into the pueblos. Collier organized the All Pueblo Council to which he reported the doings of the Lands Board and his criticisms of them. The government, egged on by Santa Fé, called a Government Council. It became obligatory to show up at meetings in the pueblos as well as at dances. There were "our Indians" and "Collier's Indians." White people and Indians gathered in tight little bunches shooting venomous glances at each other. Each side suspected the other of making false representation to the Indians. It was like a college rush week. Conservative and progressive parties appeared in each pueblo. There was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no consistency about it. They were for Collier or for the government, outs against ins, with the control of ditch water or the selling of ceremonial objects to curio hunters as the real basis of disagreement among themselves. An ambitious government man went to Santa Clara to try to reconcile the two parties and when he left there were three factions where only two had been before! What a joy if the whole tale could be told by a sapient old cacique!

Collier, which always means the organizations he represented, finally forced a senatorial investigation. The Lands Board was summoned. Indians, artists, lawyers, and ladies attended. The Senators went west and let themselves be even more baffled on the Indian's home grounds. Governor Hagerman, never a fighter, went to bed sick, harried into exhaustion. On his return from Washington he was escorted from Lamy to Santa Fé by a noisy motorcade of his admirers. Willard Nash rode on top of his car, dressed like an Indian and beating a tombé. Will Shuster's coupe carried a lifesized puppet of John Collier. More or less clever signs adorned other cars driven by Andrew Dasburg, Gus Baumann, Nancy Lane and Applegate. One in the form of a telegram called on the Senate to award the river bottom to the Indians, well stocked with sea cows and submarine milkers. Witter Bynner, playboy extraordinary, chanted a doxology: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise Him for Indians here below; no matter who may pay the cost, without the Indians I'd be lost; whoever really helps the tribes receives my curses and my jibes; and there, for Mr. Hagerman, I say to hurt you all I can, if there were many more like you, I should have nothing left to do; love for the Indian is my boast; and yet I love John Collier most."

Governor Hagerman escaped his sophomoric retinue

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as soon as they got to Santa Fé. A dramatic denouement was needed. Somebody got a rope and they hanged John Collier in effigy on a cottonwood near the Old Palace where the last real hanging took place. The artists were truly western at last!

"And," queried a perfectly proper Pasadena lady, "do you think that town should set itself up as a center of art and culture after as barbaric a performance as that!"

Indians watched that hanging in effigy without comment. Indians were in town, now, all the time. The annual Santa Fé fiesta, which had mooned along for centuries trying to keep up with whatever was new, was taken in hand, dusted off, and taught that what it really needed was more of the old, including Indian dances, arts and crafts. Rigid boards of censors passed on all Indian costumes. Original Hopi kirtles replaced American flags and flour sacks for kilts. Indians were given prizes for doing their own things in their own way. Indians got ideas. Here, clearly, was a rich source of easy income. Everything had to be encouraged, combated, and suppressed. Only suppression was impossible. A railroad discovered the gold mine, made scheduled trips to the pueblos, offering Indians and artists as equal attractions.

"So," said Alice Corbin, surfeited with the whole thing, "so we've saved the pueblos for Fred Harvey."

Then Secretary Ickes made the poetically just gesture so rare, so stimulating to the imagination. He appointed John Collier, arch-critic of the Indian Bureau, to the position of Indian Commissioner. The New Mexico Association and its Eastern branch stood by, reorganized with Oliver La Farge as president. Miss McKittrick, now Mrs. Burge, works with Commissioner Collier as smoothly as with any of his predecessors, and everybody's notions are being tried out. Day schools and better

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

architecture. More hospitals. Encouragement of dances. Modern methods of education, including the teaching of Indian arts and crafts. Action against sweat shop methods in the making of Indian jewelry, and the selling of fake as authentic Indian handiwork. And a violent transfusion of new blood into the whole dusty bureaucracy. Everybody, naturally, takes full credit for everything.

The Santa Fé group points to its pioneering in nursing, doctoring, and in the arts and crafts work.

The Indian Defense Association gained its point about increased awards for lost land and water rights: thus, according to Governor Hagerman's theory, admitting that the Indians' water priorities are not inalienable. Following the Senatorial investigations, the awards were materially increased, by act of Congress. As Commissioner, Mr. Collier has used such moneys to buy additional land for the Pueblos. He has even secured a Presidential order permitting the purchase of sub-marginal lands, for grazing. So the Pueblos, always a farming people, are encouraged to go into the stock business.

Santa Fé, barbarous as it looks to Pasadena, has taken its fights and its hates joyously, accepted defeat when it had to and now works decently enough with the victor.

And the Indians! Politics, always rife in the pueblos, have a dozen facets uncovered by white intervention, and trips to Washington to confer with Senators and cabinet members are quite commonplace to Pueblo leaders. Young Indians, animated by a faith in their own background are ready to lead a crusade into Mexico to teach Indians there the religion of Quetzalcoatl! Whether things are on the whole better or worse, they are certainly different.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Book Reviews

THE FLOWERING OF NEW ENGLAND. By Van Wyck Brooks. Dutton, $4.00.

IT IS GRATIFYING that this book immediately found a large and appreciative audience. To earlier admirers of the author's work, its success does not come as a surprise. They detected long ago a promise of eventual greatness in his writing, and guessed that its fulfillment would be assured by the choice of a great theme. Each book that Mr. Brooks published strengthened that conjecture. Each seemed to record a nearer approach to some major work whose subject he did not announce. Looking backward today, the impression is confirmed. The theme which he takes up in *The Flowering of New England* was foreshadowed by every one of his previous books. In a sense, he has devoted his whole career to preparing for it. So resolute a dedication is exceptional, and commands respect. In the case of a writer as fastidious as Mr. Brooks, it portends magnificent achievement. The long project now inaugurated is likely, when completed, to add a classic to our literature.

This project Mr. Brooks modestly describes as an attempt to sketch, in a series of volumes, the literary history of the United States. All too modestly, since this first volume makes clear that literary history in the usual sense is not his affair. His true vocation is criticism, his province the whole of our culture. Since, in his view, culture finds its most articulate expression in literature, the emphasis of his appraisal falls chiefly upon the lives and works of writers. But although literature expresses a living culture, that culture is itself shaped by the civilization which nourishes, and the social environment which implements it, and may in turn profoundly modify them. To investigate and interpret these reciprocal changes and the phenomena by which they are produced, Mr. Brooks conceives to be the critic's function. This position, adopted at the very outset of his career and consistently maintained, has distinguished his work from that of two contemporary schools in criticism. He has nothing in common with those who, by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

artificially isolating literature from its sources in thought and experience, discuss it as a phenomenon occurring in the void. He is equally remote from another group, noisily ascendant at the moment, who impose upon literature the obligation to illustrate an economic theory. Conceiving the critic's function as he does, Mr. Brooks's present undertaking results in something more valuable than personal rhapsody or philosophical fallacy. It is not literary history in the usual sense. It is a biography of the American mind and heart in their richest context.

New England's remarkable flowering occurred within a brief period of fifty years. Between George Ticknor's departure for European study in 1815, and the close of the Civil war, an important phase of American culture opened, reached its climax, and began to decline. A movement of mind had taken place, embodied by a generation of writers who expressed a collective impulse unique in our national history, which significantly influenced American life. The meaning of that impulse, and the significance of the movement, are the subject of Mr. Brooks's present volume. In his concluding chapter, he draws the reader's attention to the resemblance of what occurred in New England and the "culture cycle" described by Spengler. There is, as he points out, a striking similarity in the course run by the New England phase, with Boston, Cambridge, and Concord as its "culture city," and the phases of European culture which gave temporary preeminence to Florence, Bruges, and Weimar.

The Boston of Gilbert Stuart was already advancing toward the position of an American Athens. It was a city dominated by a mercantile patriciate as notable for public spirit as for wealth and family pride. It served a self-contained region whose population was homogeneous, deeply religious, locally patriotic, and lived close to the soil. The institutions of town and countryside still resembled one another, and this fostered growth of the region in all its parts. A sense of responsibility was everywhere pervasive. These pople felt that they were the heirs of the Revolution, they were keenly aware of an obligation to leadership, and they were determined to fulfill their duties as Americans. Prudent, conscientious, respecting learning, cultivating decorum, worldly and well traveled, they had resolved to make their city and their region the seat of a golden

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

age. They believed deeply in perfectibility. And, "as if to provide the future with a proper setting," Charles Bulfinch had already rebuilt the city.

English culture still dominated New England, but a feeling was abroad that the times were ripe for the birth of a national literature. Various institutions of learning had been founded, private libraries were being enlarged, and the Handel and Haydn Society and the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, launched in 1815, testified to the birth of an intellectual independence. But, as yet, intellectual things took second place. If the object of a Boston childhood, as Mr. Brooks wittily alleges, was to prepare for the Latin School, that of a Boston youth was to emerge from Harvard. Harvard trained the mind to form the character. One did not go there "to stimulate a dubious fancy. One went to learn to deserve a marble bust." Yet this, too, was to change when, in 1819, George Ticknor returned, after four years of European study, to assume his professorial duties at Harvard.

Ticknor and Everett, whose later career was to prove so disappointing to his students, fired the imaginations of a rising generation. They had brought back from Europe the scholarship of Gottingen and its methodology, destined for nearly a century to fix the mold of an American education. But, even more excitingly, they had met on terms of intimacy, and conversed with at length, the poets, thinkers, scientists, and scholars of every nation in western Europe. Almost irresistibly, in part unconsciously, Ticknor illuminated new and fascinating perspectives in the life of the mind. Patterns of a career for the man of letters and the scholar; the seeds of a new Romantic movement that was sweeping Europe; an evangel of contact with world ideas; a noble ideal of true culture and its illimitable influence. These, finding their way into his brilliant lectures, were to quicken a collective impulse and inspire a new age. Ironically, Ticknor himself was never to appreciate the finest fruits of the seed he had transmitted. In this respect William Ellery Channing, though he lived only to see a springtide flowering, was the more fortunate. For Channing, preoccupied with the inalienable dignity of every human life, convinced that the true rulers of a country were those who formed its mind and ways of thinking, insisting that writers

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

alone originated "all those currents of thought by which nations and peoples are carried forward," gave the creative impulse its spiritual vision.

In the sphere of moral insight, he was the awakener and emancipator of the new age.

As if further to prepare the way, to uncover the materials upon which the creative impulse might set to work, a group of historians began delving into the American past. Bancroft, Sparks, Palfrey, Hildreth, and Adams immersed themselves in their studies, contributed articles to the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW that were to reach audiences throughout the world, and presently published works that were literally epoch-making. Prescott, following in their footsteps but turning to other themes, proved that the writing of history was a form of art. Twenty years later Motley, coming to history after unsuccessful ventures in fiction, was to profit by Prescott's discovery in celebrating, through his epic of the Dutch struggle for freedom, "the modern man, the American type in its first historic appearance."

Meanwhile, Longfellow had appeared in Cambridge, to announce a romantic prophecy of the poet's function in American life, to send his students back to the whole accumulated treasure of the world's poetry, and to teach them in the end that the history and legendry of their own region were their appointed medium.

The ferment that had been brewing spread quickly, and into every walk of life. A passion for knowledge swept town and countryside. Village blacksmiths mastered forty languages; the factory girls of Lowell composed tales and poems; and the young men of good family began declining to enter respectable commerce. The new generation was thoroughly disaffected. Displeased by the mercantile civilization they had inherited, they began to explore the riches of an inner life. They were radicals and mystics. If socially minded, they attached themselves to the innumerable cults and movements that had lately sprung up: abolition, socialism, temperance, pacifism, the Utopian colony at Brook Farm. For the others, Hawthorne in his solitude spoke eloquently. "I want my place, my own place, my true place in the world, my proper sphere, my thing which Nature intended me to perform when she

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fashioned me thus awry, and which I have vainly sought all my life-time." Nature: it was a new refuge from the repellent outer world. Nature, the source of that inner life which consecrated feeling, discovered for them by Coleridge and Carlyle, by the German philosophers, and by Plato. The stage was already set, the audience ready for Emerson and Alcott, for Hawthorne, and for Thoreau.

A century later, as Mr. Brooks observes in his conclusion, "it was Boston and Cambridge that grew to seem provincial, while the local and even parochial Concord mind, which had always been universal, proved to be also national." Mr. Brooks's major single achievement in this volume is an interpretation of that mind, set forth in a series of chapters which constitute the finest and most subtle criticism written by any American of our time. Not only does he make us contemporary with the adventure of that mind in its circumstances, but, by a miracle of insight and artful selection, he persuades us to share the very processes of its thought.

To read his chapters on Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne is, in the most literal sense, to become one with them, to dwell in the world of their minds, and to conceive experience as they did.

The gospel of Emerson, the tonic moral radicalism of Hawthorne, the sturdy arrogant piety of Thoreau to his village universe, spoke for the new age, for New England, and ultimately for the nation. Emerson most nobly and generously of all, since he addressed the individual, urging upon him the moral claims of fulfilling his own peculiar vocation, yet pointed to distant and splendid horizons lying in the pathway of the race. That the central nature of things is congenial to the inherent powers of men, that whatever was or will be is to be found in the enveloping present moment, that whosoever obeys himself is a part of destiny, and that the mind is truly an oracle of mastery: such tidings came to Americans with the force of a revelation, justifying their dreams while chastening their wills. On a continent where all things were still untried, where the future lay pregnant, would there not come into being a society superior to any recorded by history, illustrious because favorable to the whole man, wherein mankind would live under the law of justice and love?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If the Concord mind plumbed the spiritual depths in man's nature, the Boston and Cambridge minds burnished its intellectual surfaces and hardened its moral muscles. Sumner and Quincy and Wendell Phillips, Dana and Mrs. Child and Mrs. Stowe, Garrison and Whittier, challenged the conscience of Boston when its prosperity was fed on slave-grown cotton. For some of them, indeed, emancipation was more than a question of justice to the colored race. Were there not "white" slaves in the North, slaves to the machine? Was there not the slavery of ignorance, and that of dollar-worship, to be extirpated? And there was Dr. Holmes, prodding the New England mind with his urbane wit, often asking it inconvenient questions, as in *Elsie Venner*, but always delighting it with his verse. There was Longfellow, becoming a world poet, and Lowell, destined to be the shell of a poet always, timid and vacillating as a critic, but superb in his appreciations of established classics. There was Charles Eliot Norton, Ticknor's nephew and Ruskin's friend, who was preparing a lifelong service to the gospel of art. "He often seemed," says Mr. Brooks, "like a learned and elegant priest discoursing of the sacred mysteries of which he had scarcely felt the inner fire." And, at the very high tide of the Boston mind, the *Atlantic Monthly* and the Saturday Club brought the Boston and Concord minds together.

For a brief period, before the phase declined, New England realized its consciously assumed mission of guiding, civilizing, and humanizing the nation. For a brief period, its writers came to be accepted as sages, oracles for the nation, speaking for its mind and heart. What gave them their supreme authority? Mr. Brooks answers the question in a passage which implies a moral vision for the writers of any day.

> The breadth of their conscious horizon, the healthy objectivity of their minds, their absorption in large preoccupations, historical, political, religious, together with a literary feeling, a blend of the traditional and the local, that gave the local wider currency while it brought the traditional home to men's business and bosoms. They filled the New England scene with associations and set it, as it were, in three dimensions, creating the visible foreground it had never possessed. They helped to make their countryside conscious of the great world-movements of thought and feeling in which they played parts side by side with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> the intellectual leaders of the older countries. In their scholarship, their social thought, their moral passion, their artistic feeling, they spoke for the universal republic of letters, giving their own province a form and body in the consciousness of the world. Moreover, there was something in their temper that made them seem friends of the human spirit. They stood for good faith and fair play and all that was generous and hopeful in the life of their time. The hold they gained and kept over the nation possessed an extra-literary sanction, as if they were the voices of the national ethos.

Something of the generosity, the large-mindedness, that Mr. Brooks imputes to them informs his own book. "Those who have in their minds the pattern of greatness," he remarks in a footnote, "recognize this pattern wherever they find it. They belong to the freemasonry of the enlightened, whatever their condition may be or wherever they live." To recognize it, and to communicate it, has been Mr. Brooks's noble service in this book. A greater work of criticism than any produced in this country during our time, its final effect is that of pure art.

LLOYD MORRIS

A NOTE ON LITERARY CRITICISM. By James T. Farrell. Vanguard Press, $2.50.

ESSAYS ANCIENT AND MODERN. By T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace, $2.00.

REACTIONARY ESSAYS ON POETRY AND IDEAS. By Allen Tate. Scribner's, $2.50.

"WE HAVE done with all moral judgments of literature," the esthete, J. E. Spingarn, proclaimed in 1910 in a manifesto which was influential until the early 1920's. But today James T. Farrell is only the latest to flog the dead horse of impressionism, and the chief interest of literary criticism is moral judgments. And so it comes about that the thoughts of a reader of the new books by Mr. Farrell, Mr. Eliot, and Mr. Tate naturally center upon the question of point of view, for a definite point of view is essential to making moral judgments and it governs the standards upheld by the critic.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

All three writers repudiate the *exclusively* esthetic point of view, Mr. Eliot most neatly when he remarks that "the 'greatness' of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards." Both Mr. Eliot and Mr. Tate are capable of elucidating this point, but Mr. Farrell possibly could benefit from instruction by Edwin Muir, who years ago explained that "literature that is judged by literary standards merely is not of the highest rank. For the greatest works are themselves the standards by which literature is judged. How, then, are they to be valued? By a standard outside of literature, by their consonance with that which is the *raison d'être* of literature? In them a far greater problem than any literary problem faces us, the problem, Why does literature exist? What is the meaning of literature?"

Mr. Farrell in *A Note on Literary Criticism* appears unaware of how the literary judgment runs on into the moral judgment — or so it seems in his attack on the New Humanists whom he crudely misrepresents — and he certainly has no suspicion that ultimately the thorough literary critic is involved in the religious problem, for to Mr. Farrell Thomas Aquinas is an "historical curiosity" whose system "must be put into a glass case in the museum of philosophy." The whole matter is fairly simple to Mr. Farrell. "I think," he says in beginning his book, "that literature must be viewed both as a branch of the fine arts and as an instrument of social influence." Of course, we murmur; and note that he has neglected to state the obvious fact that literature is also an instrument of psychological influence affecting for better or worse the consciousness of the *individual*.

The truth is that Mr. Farrell has written his extended "note" in recoil from the excesses of leftist social critics. He has grown sick of "mechanically deterministic Marxism" which he finds typified by Granville Hicks, and of "revolutionary sentimentalism" as spouted by Michael Gold, and he has interrupted his novel-writing to distribute, in Marx's phrase, certificates of mental poverty to the critics of the *New Masses*. In doing so he elaborately proves one truism after another, such as: literature is an art, it has a "refreshment-value," descriptive categories

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

like "bourgeois" and "proletarian" are not standards of value, works of art have a "persistence-value," and the like.

Lest it may seem surprising to find a critic solemnly proving what the literary tradition has always taken for granted, it is well to remind the reader that Mr. Farrell has been touring the mental slums of our day.

He is so much impressed by the unsanitary conditions of *New Masses* criticism that he has been betrayed into a pretentious demonstration that fresh air, running water, and clean houses are desirable. True, true; but we hope the argument will proceed further.

For that we look in vain to Mr. Farrell and must turn to Mr. Eliot who describes the point of view manifested by writers like Mr. Farrell as Secularism. "What I wish to affirm," says Mr. Eliot in one of the new essays collected in *Essays Ancient and Modern*, "is that the whole of modern literature is corrupted by what I call Secularism, that it is simply unaware of, simply cannot understand the meaning of, the primacy of the supernatural over the natural life: of something which I assume to be our primary concern."

It is not an accident that Mr. Farrell ignored literature as an instrument of moral stimulation. Recoiling from the excessive simplifications of leftist critics, he cannot come to rest upon an esthetic position, but neither can he define a clear position which integrates both the esthetic and the social significance of letters. Rather he floats; he is a member of that "mass movement of writers," to quote Mr. Eliot, "who, each of them, think they have something individually to offer, but are really all working together in the same direction." The reader is referred to Mr. Farrell's amusingly naive summaries of the teaching of Plato, Aquinas, Spinoza, and Whitehead for specimen "slides" of how this mass movement of writers thinks, and of how it is simply unaware of and cannot understand the meaning of the most fundamental problems of life as presented by religious philosophers.

However, it is unlikely that Mr. Farrell, who still quotes Marx as an authority in a century which has witnessed new discoveries of the greatest importance in economic science, is much interested in the criticism of Secularism. It may therefore be gently hinted that the nearest line of advance for him

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as a Marxist critic is to assimilate Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution*, a brilliant book nowhere referred to in *A Note on Literary Criticism*. Perhaps because Mr. Farrell has associated with the Stalinists, he pointedly ignores Trotsky, with the result that his book is a duller example of its kind than it need to have been.

Mr. Eliot is, of course, the greatest possible contrast to Mr. Farrell. Where before Mr. Eliot has been indirect or cryptic, he is now forthright and explicit; he criticizes life and letters from the avowed Christian point of view and as a member of the Anglo-Catholic communion. Some of the essays in his new volume appeared earlier in *For Lancelot Andrewes;* there are five heretofore uncollected essays with the titles: *Religion and Literature*, *Catholicism and International Order*, *The Pensées of Pascal*, *Modern Education and the Classics*, and *In Memoriam;* these will be read first by the old student of Eliot before re-reading the essays on Andrewes, Bramhall, Bradley, Baudelaire, and Irving Babbitt. Of the new essays the one devoted to Pascal is masterly, the one on Tennyson surprising in its attribution of greatness to a poet who has been for a generation the symbol of Victorian respectability, the one on modern education equally surprising in its plea at the close for the revival and expansion of monastic teaching orders. *Catholicism and International Order* has much to say about secular attempts to set the world right, and contains an indication of Mr. Eliot's sympathy with scientific credit-reform, a point to remember when Mr. Eliot is either charged with "retreat from politics" or with Fascism, of which several times in this book he is a severe critic. Finally, among the new papers, the essay on *Religion and Literature* which affirms the proposition that "literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint" is the key to Mr. Eliot's later critical career.

The Christian — let us say, the religious — point of view when compared with the Secular is seen at once to be more comprehensive; it includes doubt as well as faith, the "other world" as well as this, the individual *and* society. But it is also more elevated than the Secular point of view. It has in mind a norm or standard of man. It sets its eyes upon Perfection.

The religious point of view, to put the matter shortly, em-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

phasizes the extension of consciousness and the intensification of it. And from this point of view a work of literature is judged by the amount of the total consciousness of the reader it engages and by the direction — toward inner freedom or toward illusion — which it gives the consciousness. The religious critic is interested in the problem of the human norm which Mr. Eliot has stated so compactly and simply in the following passage in the key essay of the book under review. "For literary judgment we need to be acutely aware of two things at once: of 'what we like' and of 'what we *ought* to like.' Few people are honest enough to know either. The first means knowing what we really feel: very few know that. The second involves understanding our shortcomings; for we do not really know what we ought to like unless we also know why we ought to like it, which involves knowing why we don't yet like it. It is not enough to understand what we ought to be, unless we know what we are; and we do not understand what we are, unless we know what we ought to be. The two forms of self-consciousness, knowing what we are and what we ought to be, must go together."

But there is more than one religious point of view. There is the Christian tradition to which Mr. Eliot appeals as authority but which may have degenerated and deviated from its source from, let us say, the time of the Gnostics to the present, and there is the esoteric religious tradition in which a great critic like the late A. R. Orage was immersed. Mr. Eliot is still the learned judge, sifting precedent, referring to authority *behind* him, not *in* him, an interpreter of an authority external to himself. Whereas the esoteric religious discipline emphasizes the growth of personal authority based upon accurate self-knowledge and the Hermetic maxim, "As above, so below," as experimentally verified by the individual.

In Allen Tate's *Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas* the point of view is quasi-religious. It is neither traceable to a coherent external authority, an historical church for instance, as is Mr. Eliot's, nor does it seemingly stem from the authority of Mr. Tate's own experience, as the religious point of view of a Thoreau or a Nietzsche comes from the depths of the man's experience. Mr. Tate refers to religion frequently but always in terms of abstractions. We cannot locate his religion; it seems

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

literary and is certainly peculiar. Mr. Tate is seen at his worst on this subject, and in several other ways, too, in his essay on *Humanism and Naturalism*, which after Robert Shafer's murderous attack upon it when it was first published in *The Criterion*, one would have thought Mr. Tate would have buried as quietly as possible. But here it is, reprinted for the third time and unwisely recalling for the third time the savage destruction by Mr. Shafer of its immature logic, of which the following passage with its false dilemma must suffice as an example:

"What is a Platonist? Is he a man who believes what Plato believed? Or is he a man who uses the Socratic method for the exposure of contradiction? If he is the latter, to what end does he expose contradiction? Since Mr. More obviously believes things that Plato did not, he is, if he be a Platonist at all, one by virtue of his use of the Socratic method? But why does he use it?"

Aside from this essay and the recurrent vague abstruseness on religion, Mr. Tate gives every sign of becoming an important literary critic. He is certainly one of the most interesting now practising the art in America. Keen in his technical insights, devoted to both poetry and ideas, aware of moral and political problems, he has an incisive and firm style, modeled after Eliot's, and a critical philosophy, in part derived from John Crowe Ransom, which raises the question of regional culture in the United States. Two long essays in the present volume set forth Mr. Tate's views on Southern culture, views that are nowadays spoken of as the philosophy of Southern agrarianism.

They are followed by five excellent reviews of books by E. A. Robinson, Archibald MacLeish, T. S. Eliot, Edna Millay, and E. E. Cummings, and preceded by a notable essay on Emily Dickinson, essays on Hart Crane, Ezra Pound, and John Peale Bishop, and a pair of scholarly notes on Donne and Elizabethan satire.

The best exhibition of Mr. Tate's powers is in the essay on *Three Types of Poetry*, these being the poetry of the practical will (allegory), the poetry of the personal will (ending in "romantic irony") and the poetry of the total imaginative vision (Shakespeare). In this essay Mr. Tate *settles* the question

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that has been so obfuscated by leftist critics, who have been at pains to make the term, propaganda, as elastic as possible. Mr. Tate is final when he says that "the school preoccupied with what is called economic determinism of literature is in the direct line of descent from the crudely moralistic allegory of the Renaissance." It is too much to hope that the propaganda argument will cease to be a King Charles' head in critical discussion, because there is no widespread desire to fix the meaning of the term. Mr. Tate however has fixed it for those who dislike vagueness, and in time the meaning he gives will prevail over the critical disorder of the day. That is a considerable achievement in definition, one which incidentally Mr. Farrell, who also has a chapter on propaganda, would particularly benefit by studying.

By coincidence each of the three authors under review has a chapter on Humanism, and each, even Mr. Farrell indirectly, is more indebted to this belabored school than is acknowledged. And of the three attempts at criticism only Mr. Eliot has succeeded in pinning down the subtle errors of the New Humanism.

GORHAM MUNSON

THREE WORLDS. By Carl Van Doren. Harper's, $3.00

HAD CARL VAN DOREN been born thirty years earlier instead of in 1886 his autobiography might well have been interesting but it could have had little of the significance as literary history which it now possesses. For it was given to him and his generation, as but rarely to the men of any period, within the short span of fifty years to see an order of living dissolve and change not once but twice, and to enter in middle life on a world divorced in many of its attitudes of mind and social beliefs from that which gave them birth. The three worlds of Mr. Van Doren's title are that pre-War world which, in the light of the present conflict and confusion, wears so engaging an aspect of security, the world of battle, and the recent world of the depression. Through them all Mr. Van Doren has gone his way, an intelligent, temperate, eager observer, an American born of sturdy American stock, bred to the soil but forsaking it when the aroused intellect made farm

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and small town seem binding on the ranging mind, a Manhattanite since, but a Manhattanite whose urban outlook has inevitably been tempered by the experience of his Middle Western youth.

The stream of Mr. Van Doren's life ran straight and strong. A happy boyhood lived in the intimacy of a family circle singularly united, which knew laborious days but nothing of want or suffering and which, when the exertions of the farm were over, found exhilaration in books and talk; years as student and teacher at the University of Illinois, reading voraciously and widely and taking fire from the companionship of Stuart Sherman; marriage and children; removal to New York and teaching at Columbia, editing the *Nation* and the *Century*, the headship of the Brearley school, the chairmanship of the Literary Guild, lecturing, writing, meeting the men and women who were making the literature of the time — these made the tale of Mr. Van Doren's years. Through his pages pass many of the leading literary figures of his day — Edwin Arlington Robinson, whom he had early discovered for himself and to whom he brought ease by his selection of *Tristram* for the Literary Guild; Sinclair Lewis from whom he prints revelatory letters which, written in umbrage, inaugurated a lasting friendship; Elinor Wylie, whose personality enchanted him as much as her work stirred his enthusiasm; H. L. Mencken, Ludwig Lewisohn, his own brother Mark, a dozen others make their exits and their entrances.

But Mr. Van Doren's book is no mere chronicle of persons; it is the portrait of an age. It is literary America he is recording rather than literary Americans, and a national temper that has shifted from the optimistic serenity of the nineties to the despondency and confusion of the depression years. A generation, a social revolt, have waxed and waned in the years that lie between Mr. Van Doren's Urbana days and the present. "All the sad young men," who in the opening twenties looked upon their country and their elders with disillusioned eyes, who preached a crusade against the complacency which had gone to war in the belief that once it was over and the world had been made safe for democracy the old order of living could be resumed, are young no longer and not only their youthfulness but their violence has passed away. The new freedom they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

won and brandished so challengingly is a matter of course to a younger Young Generation which alas, has drunk of a despair which they, coming in the aftermath of battle to be sure, but on the upward curve of a false prosperity, were spared. Looking back upon them Mr. Van Doren can say: "The Younger Generation was nothing more than a generalization."

For the youth that followed on the war-cradled generation, that youth so tragically caught in the wake of the boom, he has nothing but compassion — compassion and a robust belief that from the suffering of the present the national stamina must emerge vigorous as of old. Mr. Van Doren went down into a slough of despond of his own during the depression years, and, on the analogy of his own recovery of faith in truth and liberty, ventures to hope for a restored America. But whether as a prophet he is right or wrong, as an analyst of the decades that have made the sum of his fifty years he is persuasive and enlightening. On his three worlds he has turned a perceptive mind and has consistently brought to bear on his interpretation of them the resources of a well stored intellect and a temperament steady rather than exuberant. As a critic his distinction has perhaps most lain in the fact that he has held himself freer of exaggeration of feeling and expression than most of his fellows, and that his criticism, if less brilliant than some, has been invariably informed, balanced, and good-tempered. If he has never thrown himself with passion into the economic and political controversies that have raged in the literary and broader world of his day, he has never been oblivious of the forces making for change about him. As a journalist he has drawn on the resources of the scholar, and as a scholar he has shown the journalist's appreciation of values. Never a crusader, or a breaker of new ground, his very detachment from causes and the equable temper of his mind have made him always a trustworthy commentator. Seen in the light of his retrospect, America of the past fifty years falls into the perspective of national history. It is a retrospect thoroughly illuminating and interesting.

AMY LOVEMAN

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JEFFERSON IN POWER: The Death Struggle of the Federalists. By Claude G. Bowers. Houghton Mifflin, $3.75.

THE STIRRING history of a crucial period in the life of the young American nation which he began to tell in his *Jefferson and Hamilton*, Claude G. Bowers, American Ambassador to Spain, brings to a conclusion in *Jefferson in Power* — an absorbingly intimate account of the eight years during which the Virginia ruler watched over the destinies of the Republic. The subtitle of the present volume is *The Death Struggle of the Federalists*, and the drama rises to greater heights than it did in the preceding volume because the growing desperation of the opponents of Jefferson drove them to much more daring measures.

Of *Jefferson and Hamilton*, so excellent a judge as the late Albert J. Beveridge wrote: "It combines the art of Stevenson, the touch of Strachey, and the learning of Channing." Writing as a frank partisan of Jefferson, the man, and of Jeffersonian principles in government, Mr. Bowers disarms criticism by his candor, and announces in his preface that since the period engaging his attention has been the subject of many accounts from the opposite side, he feels free to take up arms for the two administrations in which Jefferson was not only President, but in which his calm dignity and unshakeable adherence to democratic ideals rightfully gave him the part of the Carlylean Hero in the historical drama.

The rise of the journalist-historian during the past decade has made history both more readable and more exact in its re-creation of past times. Mr. Bowers' aims in this respect he sets forth as follows, and I do not believe that even those who disagree wholly with his point of view, can deny that he has accomplished his purposes: "To disclose the leaders on both sides of the struggle in disarray and covered with the sweat of conflict; to picture the actors off the stage and out of their full-dress uniforms; to make them men and not mere steel-engravings; and to sweep away a part of the debris of political and historical propaganda." It has been said, and fairly, I think, that not even Mr. Bowers' researches into the Spanish archives have given him vitally new material for his story — anything, that is, which could alter the accepted picture of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

period in any large sense — but his free use of newspaper files as historical sources results in a far more vivid and human panorama than any of his predecessors has presented.

A good sample of his method, useful to those who do not already know his feeling for all phases of human activity as important to correct historical writing, may be had from his first chapter, a description of Washington which he calls *Mayfair in the Mud*. I pick up at random some of his own headings: Hunting in town good, Burr's house, His dinners, His suavity, No churches, Services at the Capitol, Jefferson regularly attends, Federalists disgusted, Mrs. M. receives in bed, Captain Pike a gay cavalier, Robert Fulton's sojourn. It may be seen at once that this is the work of a man who knows that people make history, and that there are times when the smile of a woman is as important to the fate of a nation as the most solemn deliberations of its frock-coated leaders.

As for Jefferson's stout opponent, Alexander Hamilton (William E. Dodd said of the earlier Bowers book that the two men were "the greatest antagonists this country had ever produced") his part in the play declines steadily throughout the present volume until he is removed from the scene by the bullet from Aaron Burr's pistol. And those who may wonder whether Mr. Bowers' admiration for Jefferson might not lead him to be unfair to another great man, may have the consolation of knowing that Hamilton receives his due. Even if he had lived on, Mr. Bowers is certain that the Federalists would have had no support in their traitorous plans from the founder of the party, if for no better reason than because Hamilton knew Burr and thoroughly distrusted him.

There are innumerable angles from which a book of this character may be approached. Epochal events were on foot; the Louisiana Purchase, which the Federalists condemned as the shameful use of money to acquire territory that ought to have been taken by force, in all its repercussions would be enough to write a dozen reviews upon. Secessionist plots in New England and the jealousy of Virginia in that section lead one straight to the Civil war. Jefferson's use of economic action to avoid war is as vital a question today as then. The hatred of Jefferson by the Tory elements and his sweeping popular victory in 1804 found its parallel only the other day. Mr.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bowers does not underline these matters, but he is too alive to current issues not to have written with one eye on the present.

Laying aside, however, the interest in these and innumerable other questions, and forgetting for the moment that Mr. Bowers' pages are fairly packed with fascinating personalities, let us look at his Jefferson, the Virginia aristocrat whose libertarian principles were much more than the idealistic philosophy of a philosopher removed from contact with reality. This typical *homo sapiens* of the eighteenth century stands forth in Mr. Bowers' book, as I believe he did in life, as one of the most remarkably balanced characters in ours or any other history. For example, when it looked as if negotiations for the purchase of the Louisiana territory were doomed to failure, which meant war and a possible dangerous alliance with the British besides, Mr. Bowers presents us with Jefferson relaxing by writing a discussion of Jesus' teachings as compared with those of the great philosophers. At the same moment, he was directing proceedings against a Federal judge who had considerably transcended legal proprieties, and sending instructions to Meriwether Lewis for his historic expedition to the Pacific!

Freedom of speech and of the press were no more than catchwords when Jefferson came in power. But, in spite of the savage attacks that were made upon him by the Federalists, who often publicly wished him dead, he saw to it that his principles were actually put into effect. At the end of his first term, in Mr. Bowers' words:

> No longer were citizens dragged from their beds at midnight and carried into the country through the rain to be cast into loathsome cells because of criticism of those in power. The press was free. The naturalization law had been liberalized within reason. Internal taxes had been repealed and almost twelve million dollars had been paid on the public debt. The public service had been purged of parasites and pensioners, and its efficiency increased. . . . The national domain had been doubled, without bloodshed, and without an increase in taxes to meet the obligations of the purchase. The Military Academy at West Point had been established for the training of officers. And never had the country been more peaceable or prosperous.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Throughout the story moves the fascinating, yet sinister, figure of Aaron Burr. Mr. Bowers' measured opinion is that Burr was an unprincipled scoundrel, who thought only of his own interests, but he makes it plain that everything Burr wished to do found plenty of support in so-called respectable circles. The breadth and depth of the movement to split the country remains almost incredible; it had the open support of the dull-witted British Ambassador, Merry, among others, but the account of its penetration into New England still makes startling reading, and again reflects credit upon Jefferson for his calmness in the face of such dangerous conspiracies.

Mr. Bowers' account of Burr's trial takes him onto controversial ground, particularly in his discussion of Marshall's conduct of the case. But he holds his stand flatfootedly, as usual, and backs it up with the opinions of important contemporary figures, finally summing up the matter thus:

> The fact that a new definition of treason had been furnished which shut off evidence; that this definition was in direct contradiction to one handed down by Marshall a few weeks before; that Marshall attended a dinner in honor of the defendant before the trial and after the indictment, and was a political intimate of the attorneys for the defense; that he hated Jefferson and repeatedly permitted his hate to burst forth in such fashion as to force him to explanations and apologies during the trial — all this must enter into an opinion on his conduct in this case.

Beveridge, Marshall's biographer, explained that Marshall probably did not know Burr was to be the guest of honor at the dinner in question, but Mr. Bowers scoffs at this excuse, and adds that even had Marshall not known in advance, the right feeling would have led him to leave at once upon discovering Burr's presence, which he did not do.

The stormy eight years of Jefferson's rule, which saw him rising month by month in popularity, and his Federalist enemies declining in proportion, ended in a long period of relative calm. As active mentally as ever in spite of terrible headaches, Jefferson was feeling the weight of his years when the time came for his decision on a third term, which was his for the asking. He said a positive no, adding that he "retired with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hands as clean as they are empty," saw Madison elected, and went home to Monticello and the peace of that lovely hilltop. Nothing, Mr. Bowers thinks, brightened his last years so much as the resumption of his ancient friendship with John Adams, broken by Jefferson's victory in 1800, which is recorded forever in their famous correspondence. The two died the same day, the Fourth of July, 1826.

Mr. Bowers' two volumes on the Hamilton-Jefferson era take easy rank as among the finest, most readable and most scholarly of American historical writings.

HERSCHEL BRICKELL

GENERAL GRANT'S LAST STAND. By Horace Green. Scribner's, $3.75.

MANY BOOKS will probably be written, either with the idea of justifying this great American figure or of damning him, with equal intensity. Mr. Green is careful to state that he plans to do neither, but simply to present a more personal portrait of Grant as a human being — an aspect which has been peculiarly neglected. The author's interest in his subject developed from a packet of short notes written by Grant during his last days of illness to his personal physician and friend, Dr. John Hancock Douglas, Mr. Green's great uncle.

Grant's investment of his modest savings, together with those of his family and many friends in the Wall street firm of Grant and Ward in which his son was a partner, is a familiar story. Owing to Ward's dishonesty the firm failed, leaving Grant, when over sixty, not only penniless but heavily in debt. He determined to pay off these debts and provide for the future of his family by writing his memoirs. At the outset of this monumental task he became aware of acute discomfort in his throat, later diagnosed as cancer, which prevented him from dictating and forced him to write the last volume longhand in his desperate race. Death overtook him only two weeks after the last proofs had gone to his publisher, Mark Twain. His valiant effort was rewarded. Royalties from the *Memoirs* exceeded four hundred thousand dollars, a record for that day.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

All these facts are known. But not so well known are the feelings and sufferings of the dying man as he struggled to win his last victory.

The notes to Dr. Douglas show a pathetic simplicity. "I said I had been adding to my book and to my coffin. I presume every strain of the mind or body is one more nail in the coffin." And again, "If it is within God's providence that I should go now, I am ready to obey His call without a murmur. I should prefer going now to enduring my present suffering for a single day without hope of recovery." These painfully written fragments reveal the quiet, modest boy from the farm, always the fundamental part of Grant's character, even in his White House days.

Mr. Green has not attempted to write a book on the last year of Grant's life; rather he has used the *Memoirs* and the notes to Dr. Douglas to frame the window through which he looks back on the General's career. The book is most successful in treating with the period up to the end of the Civil war. It would have been wise if Mr. Green had ended, as did the *Memoirs*, with the surrender at Appomattox. The ensuing chapters are unsatisfactory and betray either a lack of knowledge of the period or, at best, an unwillingness to cover the subject thoroughly. The account of Grant's quarrel with Andrew Johnson over Stanton is misleading, while the supercilious remarks about Johnson, himself, display a complete misunderstanding of the man. The author's failure to mention the fact that Grant supported the radical element in the Senate and the House in its brutal treatment of the South during the Reconstruction period, is most slipshod. This inevitably led to the solid South of today, ever at odds with the northern and western states. And when Mr. Green cites Coolidge's *Life of Ulysses S. Grant* that "In constructive achievements . . . Grant's Administration ranks second only to that of Washington . . . " the reader may be permitted a moment of skepticism. No one can have a doubt of Grant's personal honesty, but his preference for the company of wealthy and unscrupulous men which led him to the catastrophe of Black Friday, cannot be entirely dismissed, any more than the somewhat similar weakness of the late President Harding. But dismissed it is in cavalier fashion. One cannot but feel that Mr. Green

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wished to finish these latter chapters with the utmost dispatch and perhaps did not enjoy writing them. Certainly they detract from an otherwise sympathetic and interesting work.

Despite these faults and the decidedly uncritical presentation of Grant's later career, the book recommends attention. As a new sidelight on Grant's character, discerned in the Douglas notes and as a study of the man, unbowed by criticism, poverty and illness, fighting onwards to his last and perhaps greatest victory, Mr. Green's work deserves a place in the collections of Grantiana.

DOUGLASS DEBEVOISE

THE AMERICAN IDEAL. By Arthur Bryant. Longmans, Green, $3.00.

THE AUTHOR of this group of popularized biographies has succeeded in putting a maximum amount of readability in straightforward narrative, which is punctuated by little quotation, and less comment. In the past Englishmen, writing of America and Americans, have been either far too critical or far too enthusiastic. Mr. Bryant's lives, though a little on the enthusiastic side, are at the same time critical of their subjects' failings. But the characteristic quality of his work is its good-humored gusto, which should earn him a medal from the English Speaking Union or the Pilgrims, so transatlantic is his friendliness.

He has sketched the lives of Jefferson, Lincoln, Emerson, Whitman, Roosevelt, Page, Seeger, and Lindsay for a common quality, called either the American Ideal, or the Fulfillment of the American Dream. Obviously this does not mean very much beyond the fact that these men were typical of the civilization which produced them and which, in turn, they influenced, but it is a convenient form of label.

His writing is aimed at the English reader who has no great acquaintance with American history and not much time to read it. His sources, for the most part, are secondary, and he makes no attempt to develop any new theses on his subjects. He should appeal to the American reader who knows and likes the writings of James Truslow Adams.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Bryant's writing is the type of superior journalism deplored by professional historians whose own work is apt to develop motivations and ideas far beyond the field of popular interest. Although a few of these historians, for example Morison and Andrews, have a very readable style, the majority have neither the ability nor inclination to reach any large group of the public. Hence their work would go unnoticed beyond the universities, were it not for the popularizers, whose requirements are simply readability, accuracy, and full acknowledgment of sources.

Mr. Bryant's characterization of Theodore Roosevelt is most fortunate in capturing all the blustering vividness of his career. From a brief and darkly painted background, showing the rise of Big Business, springs Roosevelt waving a big stick and shouting. After describing his life as spent chiefly in reforming, and "busting" of one sort or another, Mr. Bryant goes on to emphasize his concrete achievements in the taking of Panama and his enduring conservation and national parks work.

There are occasional prose flights, beginning "Roosevelt's Presidency checked the crude materialism that since Lincoln's death had monopolized American politics," which if not taken seriously are harmless and help to fix an impression of the character. Mr. Bryant usually sticks to facts, and his occasional quotations are often amusing. Only on Roosevelt's war attitude does he show definite prejudice and gives the impression that Wilson was a sad misguided failure. His frequent references to the Navy Department as the Admiralty are distinctly British.

Mr. Bryant's lack of profound knowledge of his subject gives him a surety and an eloquence which doubts on controversial points would destroy. His Emerson does not compare favorably with Van Wyck Brooks' portrait in *The Flowering of New England*. However, it forms a fine contrast to Whitman. There is enough of the Puritan background to explain some of Emerson's doubts and motivations. The explanation of Emerson's doctrine of the Over-soul and his use of the word Self-reliance is inadequate but enough to show his acceptance of Whitman. The portrait of Whitman is filled in by the poet himself for there are long passages of his better known verse.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A sentimental streak which already existed in the Civil war poems is brought out by Mr. Bryant's interpretation, which is otherwise conventional and un-Freudian.

Jefferson is most inadequately treated, for he is taken to represent all that is good in American democracy and given credit for an almost single-handed creation of that democracy. Because the author is limited as to space, he omits mention of the parts played by Franklin, Hamilton, and a host of others in the exciting years during and after the Revolution. This detracts from the importance of Jefferson rather than adding to it. The most unforgivable omission is that of the Ordinance of 1784, into which Jefferson wrote equality for all future states and the exclusion of slavery from the Northwest. He himself considered this one of his greatest achievements.

Mr. Bryant's other portraits suffer occasionally from omission and also a tendency to sentimentalize, but throughout he reveals his gifts as an excellent story-teller. My chief criticism is that he has given these individuals a strong group identity, which they do not possess. In his next series of American portraits he would do better to class them for what they do not have in common. And he should do another series.

JOHN J. SLOCUM

RICH LAND, POOR LAND. By Stuart Chase. Whittlesey House, $2.50.

AN OLD STORY is retold by Stuart Chase in *Rich Land, Poor Land*, an old story, but retold with accumulative and disturbing force and brought down to the minute. He describes the rapid liquidation of our natural resources in the creation of what is often falsely called wealth, but what on closer examination turns out to be a collection of pawnbrokers' tickets for a wasted and heavily pledged inheritance. Here is the economic history of the white man's seized control of the New World covering four hundred years, with the emphasis strongly placed on the downward progress of two or three profligate generations.

Yet back of these four centuries lie four millennia of Indian culture during which the red man built up arts and ceremonies

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as well as practical advantages in tamed plants and industrial processes and set up standards of excellence in many crafts. These fruits of early civilization were passed on to Europeans at the point of the sword along with the unviolated earth. Stuart Chase sums up the Indian's philosophy in these words: "He had a keen sense of his dependence on the natural environment and an aversion to a needless waste of resources. . . . A sure instinct told him that it was safer to work with natural forces than against them. That instinct, battered by generations of ignominy and humiliation, still survives."

In contrast there is the acquisitive, looting philosophy of Europe which, transplanted by conquerors in all parts of the world, is now intent upon ravaging all reservoirs of natural wealth the earth has to offer.

The first adventurers were frankly on the make as may be seen in Sir Walter Raleigh's *Guiana*: "To conclude," he writes, "Guiana is a country that hath yet her maidenhead, never sacked, turned, nor wrought. . . . The graves have not been opened for gold, the mines not broken with sledges, nor the images pulled out of their temples. It has never been entered by any army of strength and never conquered or possessed by any Christian prince."

Later Sir Walter Raleigh attempted to establish a colony of Englishmen in what is now the United States. Still later a republic took over the job of Christian princes. With a rapidly accelerating tempo in destruction this democracy has proved a most deadly foe to the concept that mankind of the present holds a responsibility to mankind of the future. As Uncle Joe Cannon put it: "What has posterity done for us?"

The thing I do not like about Stuart Chase's book is what doubtless will endear it to many other readers, namely his general pleading for regional planning under governmental auspices and, more particularly, his special pleading for the Tennessee Valley Authority in all its purposes and activities. In timing of publication as well as in the sentiments it expresses, this book has political color. But the critic happens to be of opposite belief.

To me, conservation of natural resources is part and parcel of frugal mindedness. It hardly fits in with spendthrift methods, private or public. It must be advanced by true under-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standing of its necessity and by a cultivation of restraints resting on ethical considerations. It is hard to escape the conclusion that present emphasis on planned economy is a kind of exit-play from a situation brought about when deliberate destruction of foods and other materials unexpectedly coincided with two years of drought. Of course the hacienda system of Spanish Mexico was along the lines of regional planning. But do we want that? Certainly, it did not lead to conservation.

In the growth of our finest ideals and in the successes of which we have most reason to be proud, government, *per se*, has played but a small part. Let us not forget that in the general evolution of human institutions government emerges as a sanction for the equal administration of just laws and common facilities and for the preservation of social unity. Even before the New Deal our government frequently stepped out of its proper field. We cannot approve of its administration of the public domain, or its treatment of Indian tribes. Today the idea is taking form that government should be a handicapping body, penalizing efficiency and subsidizing inefficiency to the end that the unfit shall not only survive but prosper. In the long run such activity will not advance conservation but will have the inevitable result of producing a split-personality in the group mind, thereby lowering moral restraints rather than raising them.

Today in several great nations including our own we see governments no longer administering moral sanctions purely and simply. Instead they are inclined to seize power and use it for partisan purposes. Why should we turn a reform which calls for the passionate cooperation of mankind over to the instrumentalities of political aggrandizement which today abrogate to themselves the privilege of breaking pledges of the most sacred character and of cheating and robbing society in fundamental ways for the presumed advantage of special political classes, whether capitalistic or proletarian?

The conviction that political power cannot be obtained and maintained in any other way than through the destructive use of natural resources now grips most rulers in all varieties of government, monarchial, republican, socialist, fascist, and what you will. On the other hand there is no reason why any of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

these forms of government could not follow conservation if it became a fixed ideal.

Let us examine a little more closely the demonstration which Stuart Chase makes, all-round conservationist that he is. It seems that with our eyes open we have abused nature on practically every score. In addition to being bad farmers, we have been bad cattlemen, bad sheepmen, bad lumbermen, bad fishermen, and bad sportsmen. We have wasted our arable lands, our grazing lands and our forests; we have depleted our mines and our fishing banks; and we have brought, through mere lust for killing, extinction of many birds and animals and threatened extinction of others. We have disturbed profoundly all of nature's equilibria. Obviously this indictment is so broad that it touches nearly every man, woman and child in our entire nation. And if urban populations and industrial workers seem to escape some of the direct charges, the indictment easily can be amended to include them. For we are now making nearly everything faster and worse than ever before; we do not use materials as they are capable of being used because of a vicious theory that poor quality leads to quick replacements. We cut down trees for the sake of shoddy publications. Reduced to last analysis the demonstration which can be made against waste is an arraignment of our civilization and also, let it be said, of the entire world civilization of the white race, even of some of our yellow-skinned imitators.

But while a conservationist, Stuart Chase is not in any sense a conservative. His plan is not to awaken our people as a whole, or mankind as a whole, to the end that every offending individual stop his evil ways and every society re-examine the validity of its social purposes. Rather, his scheme is to have the federal government enlarge its activities tremendously by calling into service a corps of Paradise-planners. But perhaps this would only result in society surrendering reform into the safe keeping of the worst offender.

It is true, as he aptly points out, that: "Our land has been washing away but not for lack of knowledge. Jefferson, Madison, Washington, and Edmund Ruffin were practicing contour plowing, rotation and strip cropping a century ago and more. It happened because Americans as a class were indifferent."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I should amend the last sentence to read: "It happened because Americans as a people were indifferent." It is true that the issue of class comes into the Tennessee Valley Authority and other projects which are now being revamped to appear as regional planning although they were not that in original conception. The issue of class, expressing itself through a political majority working for its own advantage against the common good, first occupied a major place in American politics when Andrew Jackson won in popular voting and promptly put through the Indian Removal Bill, darkest blot on our national shield, and for the first time announced and defended the spoils system in federal offices. This freed the Tennessee country and adjacent territories from the Cherokee and other civilized tribes and permitted a riff-raff of white men to occupy their lands. Sometimes it seems to me as if a curse still rested over this early battleground for class advantage, over equal justice, for here we find illiteracy and social inefficiency most signally rampant.

The federal government, now under one party, now another, is responsible for much that is evil in the history of soil and cover deterioration in the United States. From the first it had jurisdiction over the public domain but did not administer this trust with anything approaching wisdom. After one summer's experience with a lawyer doing a land-office business in North Dakota many years ago I can testify that subversive influences were strong, as they were also in the giving of the claims. The government has had a trustee's obligations over the economic development of Indian land. Has it conserved their forests, their oil supplies, their grazing facilities? It has not. Government dams and irrigation projects have a very poor record on the whole.

Stuart Chase makes an illuminating remark. He is speaking of the politically chosen staff of TVA, experts in every line. "We find," he says, "a young woman whose duty it is to pacify the few rugged individuals who announce noisily that they would rather drown beneath the rising reservoir than leave their cabins. The Liberty League should erect a monument to them, for they are courageous as they are cracked."

H. J. SPINDEN

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AN AMERICAN DOCTOR'S ODYSSEY. By Victor Heiser, M.D. W. W. Norton, $3.50.

THIS BOOK is, first of all, a thrilling story of adventure. If it occasionally outrivals Halliburton and Baron Munchausen it is, perhaps, only because truth, slightly dressed up, will always be stranger than fiction — slightly dressed up. In the second place the book represents a veritable encyclopedia of contemporary tropical medicine, intelligible and interesting to the lay person, I would think, as well as to those scientifically minded. In addition to this it throws light upon the age-old problems of the relations of government to education, sanitation, and the rights of the individual.

The book opens with Dr. Heiser's own experience as a young boy in the Johnstown flood. A superb description of this catastrophy sets a high mark for adventurous narrative, which the author repeatedly attains throughout the five-hundred page book describing his sixteen voyages around the world. This horrible experience of a disaster affecting thousands — he was left an orphan by it — may perhaps explain his reaction to what he calls "retail medicine" as seen through the eyes of a medical student. He says:

> The customary routine after finishing at the hospital was to go immediately into private practice, but the more I saw of the latter the more I came to consider it a retail effort. If I were to make a place for myself in the medical world I must necessarily learn first to be a good doctor, but before I had spent many months as an interne I knew I was not going to be either a general practitioner or a specialist. The prevention of disease on a wholesale basis appealed to me far more.

Perhaps I may be pardoned for suggesting that such "retail" practitioners as Lister, Semmelweiss, and Oliver Wendell Holmes made surgery and childbirth relatively safe by their efforts. Moreover it was an old fashioned practitioner, Knowlton, who first pointed out in 1831 that contraception offered possibilities both for individual and public health protection.

Heiser does not mention birth control, as far as I can find, anywhere in his book as being applicable to the health prob-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lems of the East. With all that he has done to guide nature's laws along beneficent lines in the way of prevention of specific diseases, it is odd that he seems to adopt the semi-religious or sentimental point of view on population problems. One might well think before reading this book that it would be utterly ridiculous to hope to control population in the Orient through birth control. Heiser, however, has worked wonders as great as this through his authoritative administration of health policies and through education. Margaret Sanger, recently returned from the Orient, reports progress along these lines, particularly in Japan.

I do not intend to leave the impression that I consider birth control an easy answer to the population problems of the East. It is probable that for a very long time, if effective at all, it would have a dysgenic effect; for the best stock, physically and intellectually, would use it first, and the poorer stock, now protected by modern sanitation from depletion by epidemics, would use it last. Unfortunately modern attempts at race improvement in America and elsewhere have shown this early dysgenic phase.

Dr. Heiser's book, however, gives one a fair understanding of tropical disease and methods of control. He points out that cholera could be largely prevented by the single hygienic measure of boiling water. The Chinese, he says, have no cholera because they are accustomed to drinking tea made with boiled water and to eating cooked foods. But in other parts of the Orient water is never boiled, food and hands are not washed and soil pollution is prevalent. Dr. Heiser had brilliant success by telling the natives: "You can eat cholera and you can drink cholera but you can't catch it."

This disease has particular interest for Heiser and he devotes considerable space to it. In the Philippines there have been seven great epidemics since 1820, the deaths in Manila alone reaching a thousand a day at one time. As with typhoid, cholera carriers existed, but these Dr. Heiser was eventually able to detect by proper examination. Artesian wells were dug, after which the death rate dropped from fifty to twenty-five per thousand.

In the case of plague the death rate was terrific, in one form a hundred per cent. Prevention was shown to consist in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"building out" the rat. The difficulty of this feat can well be seen when it is pointed out that rats breed with enormous rapidity. Litters consisting of six to sixteen arrive three to five times a year and the young breed when they are less than three months old!

The "building out" of the rat was a difficult but wonderfully effective business, once the officials were convinced of its necessity. Rats do not swim, except under extraordinary circumstances, and all vessels were moored at least six feet from the pier, special rat guards being placed on lines leading to the shore, and all gangplanks being raised at night. All arriving ships were fumigated before reaching shore, to the intense distress of the stowaways! And finally all new wharves were built of steel-sheathed concrete. In the city houses were rat-proofed, their breeding places gassed, and the rodents themselves relentlessly pursued by ferrets, terriers, and human rat-catchers.

Dr. Heiser's work with leprosy alone would insure him a permanent place in the history of tropical medicine. This age-old disease can apparently be controlled only by complete isolation. This he had the courage to carry out in the Philippines, and with marked success. Moreover, by collaborating with other scientists, a form of treatment with chaulmoogra oil has been perfected with the results that ten per cent are apparently cured, fifty per cent cosmetically cured, thirty per cent arrested cases, and only ten per cent show no improvement. There are three million lepers in the world, situated in India, China and Japan mostly. The leper colony in the Philippines has lately rebelled and demanded its freedom. This is doubtless a reaction to the recently acquired political independence of that state. In this country leprosy exists and may spread in Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and California.

Smallpox is called the Heavenly Flower by the Chinese. Heiser does not explain the derivation of the name but it probably has something to do with the oriental habit of propitiating an evil spirit by flattery. In the Philippines there were about one hundred thousand deaths from this cause between 1918 and 1920, mostly among children. This appalling death rate resulted from just one thing — the vaccination laws had not been observed. After the population was innoculated forty thousand lives a year were saved. Perhaps the final argument

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against the anti-vaccinationists is contained in the closing sentence of this chapter: "There are very few anti-vaccinationists left in the Philippines; most of them have died of smallpox."

And so the wonderful story of the control of tropical diseases goes on. Beriberi was killing a hundred thousand people a year in the Philippines alone, one thousand of these in government institutions. The research done upon the disease showed that it was due to the absence of vitamin B from the diet. Heiser took over the feeding in one large institution, one half the inmates being fed polished and the other half unpolished rice. Those who ate polished rice became ill of the disease, while those eating the unpolished remained well. Then the diets were reversed; the well group receiving polished rice and the ill group the unpolished. The well group sickened while the ill group became well. Europeans and Americans were not affected as they ate many articles of food containing vitamin B that were economically beyond the reach of the Filipinos. Dr. Heiser suggested putting a small tax on polished rice so that the lowest classes would be able to afford only the unpolished, but this suggestion was unfortunately not made law.

Hookworm did great harm in our own South and it took the most tactful kind of handling to teach the southerners to deal with it. They were impressed when a shiftless, lazy, no-account man became energetic and well and able to support his family after treatment had rid him of the worms. They were impressed when mentally retarded children, after treatment, became bright and moved to the top of their classes. So they took advice and built latrines to end soil pollution.

Malaria, the scourge of the tropics, was for a long time thought to be an act of God about which nothing could be done. When it was discovered that a certain mosquito was the carrier it became a question of getting rid of mosquito breeding places. Malaria was no longer an inevitable evil.

An interesting story is told of puri puri, or witchcraft among the Kanakas, a South Sea Island tribe. They believe implicitly that when a witch doctor places a spell upon them, announcing the hour of death, when that hour comes they will die. And they do! Time after time they were examined by Heiser's doctor friend and found to be in perfect health, but when the promised hour came round their hearts stopped beating. Once

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when a workman on a Papuan plantation announced that he had had a spell put upon him and was about to die, the skeptical owner, who would stand no such nonsense, said, "Well, maybe so, but you'll die from this first," and he took a whip to him and when the man ran he chased him. The man did not die; the white man's magic was stronger.

This is rather like the tactics employed with frightened horses. If they are afraid in front make them more afraid behind!

Many of Dr. Heiser's stories mention people whose names are well known. There is the one about Haile Selassie in Addis Ababa, whom he twitted about the backward condition of his country. That wise monarch had his answer, "You have twelve million unemployed in your country, have you not?"

Dr. Heiser answered in the affirmative.

"Here everyone works, everyone has clothes, and everyone has food to eat. What more could you want?" There was no answer.

To return to the broad problem of sanitation in the East, the reasonable point of view would seem to be that at least for the present satisfactory laws cannot be enforced by the Oriental people without outside help, and that in some places like Hindu India not even a beginning can be made because of religious prejudice. It would seem wise to pick out those people who are reasonably educatable and self-disciplined, and whose racial stock is inherently good, and concentrate on their improvement.

When Dr. Heiser first started his work in the East he was told that it was impossible to sanitate the Orient; that the only possible solution was to make the little spots where the white man had to live relatively safe. But he showed in the Philippines and in other places that, granted strong authority and a policy of persistent and tactful education, many of these people can be brought to practice good and effective sanitation. Moreover, effective sanitation is closely tied up with the political and economic situation. In the Philippines when the Harrison regime was in force and the people given more self-government than they could handle, sanitary laws were not enforced and severe epidemics broke out again.

The European colonizing powers have long had the point of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

view that it was impossible to clean up the native quarters. The American viewpoint, on the other hand, has been to consider the native his "little brown brother" and to try to combat the diseases and epidemics that wiped him out in such large numbers. One wonders as to the future effects on the race, the weakest of whose numbers are so carefully nurtured to be the parents of the next generation. The older colonizing powers were firm in enforcing regulations on the natives, whereas the point of view of some Americans has been to allow self-regulation before the natives were ready for it.

It is hard to sum up a book as vast in its scope as this one. It is beautifully written and one marvels that one human could see so much, accomplish so much, and tell about it so adequately. Dr. Heiser says that lack of space prevents his mentioning the months spent with the armies during the war; the years of effort to establish a museum of hygiene, work on speedier relief for industrial accidents, work on the Railway Sanitary Commission, and for the spread of child health education. What a man! If those adventures are as colorful and well written as are these present ones, the new book will be eagerly awaited.

RICHARD M. PIERSON, M.D.

THE PEOPLE, YES. By Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace, $2.50.
SPLENDOUR IN THE GRASS. By Audrey Wurdemann. Harper's, $2.00.
THE ASSASSINS. By Frederic Prokosch. Harper's, $2.00.

WITH the publication of *The People, Yes, Splendour in the Grass*, and *The Assassins*, American readers have been given the opportunity of new acquaintance with the poetry of one of the best known figures in twentieth century American literature, of one of the heralded young poets, and of one almost entirely unknown in this country. The first two books share the interest of affecting reputations already more or less established; it is the last (the author's first in verse) which stands most firmly and beautifully by itself.

That *The Assassins* has been mentioned seldom and slightly in American critical journals is surprising when one considers the original and oceanic music of the poems, their terrible and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beautiful thought, and the skilled technique molded by that thought and playing lucidly over and through it. In England, Mr. Prokosch has been encouraged and acclaimed as a writer of genuine talent to be watched with appreciative and serious expectation.

Mr. Prokosch has a wonderful, modern yet ageless consciousness of geography, expressing itself in a music of names that rolls round the world. He knows Asia and Africa; he "rolls over on Europe" (to use Stephen Spender's fine image) and looks across to the Rockies. He dreams of the "silvery Scottish dawn," evoking the "pastoral shadow" of the "moist nocturnal island." He hears "the hooves of the caravan over the terrible copper swamps of the high Irrawaddy." He sees darkness, and

> . . . daylight
> Rolls like a flood across the Alaskan coast:
> White the Illyrian cliffs and the Pontic ridges,
> Down from Montana pour the enormous rivers
> Out of their granite night,
> The young are chanting on the edge of Syria,
> Slowly the swamps of Mexico grow bright.

This marvelous knowledge of place names he never misuses. The cities, meadows, mountains, countries he brings inside the frame of his poems are always for the sake of composition, to build a particular picture, a "vista" or "wilderness" of the mind. And upon the features of the world he is aware of the features of man, the human spirit, journeying across the world in misery, tormented by its own evil and its own redeeming longing for beauty.

With his sense of space goes a sense of the past, enriching and tempering his judgment of the present, and shaking his hopes of the future. No other poet writing today has such terrible awareness of dark ages rolling behind and ahead, threatening to ruin corrupted cities and complete and punish the degeneration of man; of other glacial periods moving slowly nearer to freeze and grind the "towers and windowed cliffs" and the "bodies deprived of spirit." He watches the political fanaticism, the brutal disregard of the human spirit, which today sweep Europe and Asia with the horror of what

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

similar violence in the name of religion accomplished in the Middle Ages:

> This is the final dreading
> Of history ending, and end to living and terror spreading,
> The dead destroying, the living dying, the dream fulfilling,
> The long night falling and knowledge failing and memory fading.

Therefore he fears the assassins of the human spirit — the decadence, the "delicate ordered self-destruction" of tragedians, the perversion, defeatism, fanaticism of "the dead destroying" and "the living bleak with impermanence." Therefore he hates dictators, their "frightful dominions," with "vile music strung to disguise the autumn of our epoch," driving toward "dissolution of truth." Therefore he watches with horror the approach of war,

> The coming of a new and imbecile terror
> Unreckoned even in our most romantic visions,
> Bursting the secret dungeons of our history
> Guarded through seasons of prayer and quietude.

Mr. Prokosch is not an alarmist, not a propagandist, not a pessimist. He sees that the evil in the world is there because it is in men, more cruel than "the actual earth, the external seas," but he is saved from pessimism by his compassion. Like Hardy, he is moved by love of men and women and pity for their suffering to cry out against the evil and weakness which cause that suffering. "O vast lord, protect them," he prays, from "such hostility to love, such horror and hate" beneath the loveliness which sheathes "our powers in incalculably deep and everlasting danger."

Sometimes he uses satire to blister the little lovers of sensitivity, the children forever who "dream of their mothers when the winter darkens," the poets suffering verbally and comfortably at the passing of heroes, the dreamers of Shelley dreaming, the hypocrites lusting while "the bones melt and the spirit breaks . . . and Europe grows slim and pale."

Compassion and beauty illumine his own creation of beauty in his poems as they did in his novel *The Asiatics* — a strange, brilliant, nervous, sensuous book in which he outwardly hints of the interior reality of Asia, and inwardly watches men striv-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing toward what they do not understand, "the endless desire for the beautiful," struggling between reason and instinct. This same desire and struggle are even more vividly and sensuously embodied in *The Assassins*, in its startlingly lovely images, exact and fearless, powerful but never distorted; in its subtle, fascinating use of rhyme and assonance; in the flowing rhythm, never monotonous, never obstructed, with a special use of suspension. Countless lines are beautiful in themselves, and twice beautiful as part of poems of imaginative unity.

Here is no conventional craftsmanship nor experimental technique; here are skill and feelings wonderfully blended. Rarely is modern poetry so exciting to discover, so enchanting to read aloud, so compelling to remember.

And yet this book, though it is more beautiful, more skillful, more controlled and sustained, will not have the wide appeal nor influence of Mr. Sandburg's new book. This is not because it is more difficult and complicated, more cultivatedly sensitive, more terrible because less relieved, more subtle and perfect technically, though it is all these things, but because it does not speak as directly of the immediate problems and with the universal language of *The People, Yes.*

Mr. Sandburg is no "grand old man" of literature; however outstanding his white hair and long established reputation make him among milling litterateurs, he is distinguished primarily and immediately for the living quality and simple greatness of his work. He takes the people for his hero — not with the vainglory and partisan sentimentality of some proletarian writers, but with humor and easiness and quiet respect for what they and he, as one of them, think and feel and want. He looks at them honestly, sees their foibles, ignorance, gullibility and limitations, but sees too their admirable bravery, their saving humor, their salty shrewdness, their "capacity to take it," their plain worth and patient dignity and slow painful moiling toward justice and equity and freedom. What a wonderful people, whose boasters can say "Pike's Peak or bust," and come back laughing, "Busted, by gosh!," who know that "man is a two-legged animal without feathers, the only one who cooks his food, uses an alphabet, carries firearms, drinks when he is not thirsty" and stands off death and despair by knowing how and when to laugh!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The people are not to him just the people of one class or of one age. He thinks with equal irony and affection, not literary but genuine, of Pharaoh's slaves, of Chinese philosophers, Iphicrates, Ford, and poor Marshall Field; of elevator boys, and Lincoln, and Indians "who were there to meet the boat;" of teachers, some big business men like Filene and scientists still people at heart, troubled for their fellow people, working humbly, living plainly and honestly. As Archibald MacLeish has ably pointed out, Mr. Sandburg knows that the tradition of the people is not dead, and he knows what it is — the tradition of people bred and living on or from the land, a thing which metropolitan radicals and poets too often forget.

Events he sees through people, not for themselves. His book has therefore a curiously timeless timeliness; he makes the advertisements, the industrial developments, cooperatives, bread lines, farm strikes, elections and frauds of this century and decade the setting for his people, the forces pulling them around, the results of their failures and mistakes, their weakness, passivity, stupidity. Hunger, dirt, and unemployment he knows, and knows that while they press on people the people cannot make moon poems and sun poems, songs of special clean babies and pretty scenes and graceful tunes.

Where does he find out all he knows about people and their lives? By listening and talking to the people, who "have gathered their clews of wisdom and . . . talk things over in the bus, the elevated, the subway," on the roads, in lock-ups, hotels, saloons, country stores, school houses, factories, and labor meetings. From the people he has heard and remembered proverbs, saws, parables, tall tales, superstitions, wise cracks, comebacks, complaints and hallelujahs, spirituals and lullabies and jazz, and all these things he puts into his book.

From the people too he gets his robust, racy, pithy, slangy, trite, salty, powerful, wonderful rhythmical speech. Sometimes he talks with the swift staccato realism, the jumbled inselectiveness of a newspaper or a radio; sometimes he writes with the solemn chanting beauty of the Bible. Concrete and pure at times as the best imagist verse, his poetry is at other times vague, diffusely rhapsodic and formless as Whitman's, as the sur-realists'. But on the whole his writing is clear and cumulative in power. The lyricism is used with antistrophic effective-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ness; the diction is tough and marvelously accurate, the images original and contemporary. He does not always sustain image and rhythm successfully; he sometimes presents the raw material of poetry, not poetry itself. His book is too formless to be called an epic, but it is a book — a whole, multiple-sided and many colored. It is not all poetry, but all of it is poetic.

The real weakness of the book is that it does not quite reach a goal either in thought or in form. There is honesty in his not saying, "What next?" "Who knows the answers, the cold inviolable truth?" This honesty and respect for truth and suspicion of exact answers are prompted by the suspended judgment and mature moderation which are signs of the truly just and civilized mind — signs which the shouting radicals and Liberty Leaguers might well read as they run. Mr. Sandburg knows that the villain is not one class, one system, but the source of systems — men themselves. He refuses to deceive with easy answers the people he has understood and won by love; he knows that we "stand in this whirlpool" where no one can do more than guess. But his book makes one eager and impatient to follow his slow thoughtful development toward clarity of thought in his next years and his next work.

Nor is Mr. Sandburg perfectly sure of his goal in form. The awkwardness with which he sometimes handles dialogue, the endless catalogues, the too numerous adjectives, become a little wearying. But it is the general diffuseness and planlessness which basically weaken the book.

At the end one can see a tying together of refrains and themes from several parts of the book:

This old anvil laughs at many broken hammers.
There are men who can't be bought.
The fireborn are at home in fire.
The stars make no noise.
You can't hinder the wind from blowing.
Time is a great teacher.
Who can live without hope?

In the darkness with a great bundle of grief the people march.
In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for keeps, the people march:
"Where to? what next?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And throughout the book the cryptic endings and beginnings of poems, and the lyric notes tighten and brighten the rich speech, the free verse, the rhythmical prose paragraphs. But the poet who earlier wrote such finely integrated poems as *Chicago*, *Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind* and *Cool Tombs* could still preserve the springiness, the shuttling quality of people speaking together, and at the same time select, shape, play off, point and intensify that speech imaginatively into poetry.

There is a strange appropriateness in the title Miss Wurdemann has chosen for her new book, for although she does not use the phrase in the sense that Wordsworth meant it, her special use of it fits her own poetry — poetry which finds its splendor in grass, flowers, grapes, bees, flies and small things. A skillful craftsman, Miss Wurdemann is much more careful and deft than most of her contemporaries and less vigorous and original than the best of them. Her rhymes, her meters, her patterns are ably adapted to their subjects. She has a thin, crystal exactness in images, with especial sensitivity to light, a delicate ear for sound, and an ability occasionally to write a memorable line that is haunting — "the little laughing face of death," "behind a dry mouth and a fistful of rusty beard." At times her diction is almost brittle clear, at others archaically vague. If she were not sincere, she would probably, as even her young readers know, be more clever. What she tries to do she does admirably; it is a mistake to criticize her for what she does not try to do.

When Miss Wurdemann gets outside herself, into the old man dying, the immigrant woman remembering, the little old vendor who

> . . . fumbles the reins, and fumbles the flowers in his cart,
> Leaning his heart
> For a little against their brief and mingled splendour

she is less adroit technically, but more moving; and what she says matters more. Certain of the poems in this new volume show growth beyond her first one, show her leaning out of her own immediate ambush of heart and senses, in *After Adam*, *Next Year*, *God-Maker*, *O That One Bird*, for example.

MILDRED BOIE

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MORE THAN BREAD. By Joseph Auslander. Macmillan, $1.50.

WITH each new volume that he issues, it is becoming more apparent that Joseph Auslander is one of our few major poets. His *More than Bread*, containing his maturist work, is before me; and in it I find that same iron note we have come to expect from this young singer, plus a deeper feeling, a more profound sorrow, like that of Housman, for the tragedies that engulf most of mankind. There is, moreover, that "splendor of words" which he himself celebrates in a fine and smooth Shakespearean sonnet, which concludes with the striking line, "That ragged page ripped from the promptbook of Time."

And there is the magnificent *I Am Poetry*, beginning,

> I am Poetry.
> I am as old as yesterday.
> I am as young as tomorrow.
> I am the servant of anguish.
> I am the antidote of despair.

He can sing of derricks and rainbows, finding the fragile and evanescent rainbow as strong, if not stronger, than the heavy man-made machine that plows into the solid earth. Here his power is doubly manifest, for he sings:

> The derrick splits earth wide apart;
> The derrick bites a mountain through;
> The rainbow raises up the heart,
> Which derricks want the strength to do.

Mr. Auslander does not belong to the petty and indolent school which discounts form and melody. He has reverence for his great predecessors, and clings to their safe traditions. His rhymes are like bronze bells. His meters move with the easy gusto of wide rivers, and they flow out to the changeless sea. He is not afraid of order — beautiful order. He loves the stern, undeviating adherence to rhythm which Keats gave us; and he speaks of him in two sonnets, *Writ in Water*, which end with the lines:

> We face the Perilous Foam, the Silent Peak;
> We find a name there, but we cannot speak.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The chains of his art do not bind him; rather, they give him that sense of freedom known only to the poet who actually loves the captivity of form and sure foundations. He wonders about that "person from Porlock" who interrupted Coleridge when he was writing *Kubla Khan*:

> Was he the world of prose
> That strode to the door and knocked,
> And shattered the dream like a rose
> Till the magical reverie rocked,
> Splitting the shell? Who knows?

In his Nature pieces he betrays his finest lyric gift and poetic sensibilities.

> Brief summer of the aspen bowed,
> No sorrow broods upon your leaf;
> Your laughter shakes no bell; no shroud
> Commemorates your grief.

And he knows that

> It is ourselves that divide
> The sun from the rush of rain,
> The ebb of passion from the full tide,
> Pleasure from pain.

This is a profound note in English poetry: eloquence mixed with rich emotion. In these perilous times we need a voice like Joseph Auslander's, to give us faith for cloudy days.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

HEADS AND TALES. By Malvina Hoffmann. Scribner's, $5.00.

TO A REFLECTIVE person who visited the World's Fair in Chicago in 1933, the most memorable features were two permanent exhibits not directly a part of the exposition itself — the planetarium and the Hall of Man in the Field Museum. The latter was incomplete at the time, having only seventy-three of the one hundred and one bronzes by Malvina Hoffmann. These anthropological figures, a mammoth undertaking in sculpture, represent five years of unrelenting labor in all corners of the globe. And as Sir Arthur Keith, whose sculptured head is the final one in the collection, said, "Solely

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a mind endowed with the gift of such sympathies (that extend alike to all races of mankind) was capable of creating the sculptures arrayed in the hall, which are pervaded by a human and kindly spirit." Of further interest is the fact that "many a vanishing race will continue to live only in the statues or busts displayed in this hall." In Sir Arthur's opinion then, Miss Hoffmann is a "great sculptor who lavishes her art in the interests of anthropology."

Paderewski, to whom *Heads and Tales* is dedicated, persuaded Miss Hoffmann to write her book. It was to have been first merely the account of the Field expedition, but that would have been incomplete and fragmentary without the autobiographical material, the career, the lifetime of unconscious preparation for that stupendous task. The visitor to the Hall divines that each head had its "tale," and is aroused by a curiosity to know it and to know about the remarkable personality who modelled it. Henry Field, one of the heads of the department of anthropology of the museum, tells this story of one figure — that of the woman of Hieedley caste of Jaipur, India, the untouchables. A blind man of some education visited the exhibit, and paused to feel the features of this particular portrait. As he did so, tears silently rolled down his cheeks. He afterwards dictated a letter to the curator, saying that never before had he discerned such suffering in a human countenance; a suffering that made the handicap of his blindness seem as nothing.

When M. H., as she likes to sign herself, volunteered and was sent by Herbert Hoover to the Balkans on Red Cross relief after the War, she first consciously awoke to an interest in racial types. There she learned by heart that expression of "resignation toward life," and those revealed "stigmas of a poverty that bears malice towards none." Out of her experiences in the Balkans grew the plan and later the execution of a relief plaque and bronze group of the four dread horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Much of her chronicle is not in direct time sequence. While it does not lack unity of thought, its content is mostly formless and unplanned. Its style vacillates between a sort of shorthand and diary-note prose, and an occasional formal phrasing, when she is telling of the death of some fellow artist, for ex-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ample. This very unevenness in the writing points to the fact that unlike so many of its predecessors in kind, *Heads and Tales* is not ghost-written. But no one could entirely bungle a life of such amazing achievements. The memoirs are an avowal of M. H.'s fears and ambitions, and of those relationships that promoted her artistic career. Yet there is little that is personal or intimate in the narrative itself, for M. H. is an able reporter, among other things, and sprinkles humor generously through the pages.

Malvina Hoffmann was the daughter of Richard Hoffmann, the pianist, who toured the country with Jenny Lind in the 1850's. He once said to her "above all you must *be* an artist, after that you may create art." This advice she consciously obeyed. Her first work was a bust of him which she took to Rodin in Paris, in her successful effort to interest him in her as a pupil. She quotes the great and lovable idealist repeatedly, and she it was who helped arrange the posthumous exhibition of his sculpture years later. She married the young violinist, Samuel Grimson, who played several seasons with her father and who was later to be of such invaluable assistance, with his photography and indefatigable energy and patience, on the Field Museum project.

M. H. conveys admirably the excitement of a young artist, consumed by ambitious fires, advised by the great master who recognized her flare for portraiture and character. At Rodin's instigation she studied anatomy by dissection minutely. Mestrovic, Yugo-Slav sculptor under whom she studied for a considerable time in 1922 said "that the first thing I must do was to learn the principles and technical side of my work better than most men, before I could start even." This she did, becoming very absorbed in the practical side of her art. She followed painstakingly the processes of plaster casting, the use of negocoll, the repairing of tools. Indeed one of the most dramatic sections in the book is devoted to the mysteries of the sand-mold method, and the lost wax method of bronze casting described by Cellini. The reader will marvel at her limitless patience, her unswerving faith. "The fact that we cannot correct our faults once they are recorded in metal, seems to sever us from our work," she writes.

She was unquestionably influenced by the belief of Rodin

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Mestrovic that soul is lacking in most modern sculpture. M. H. is religious in a deeply cosmic sense. And she devoutly insists that "it is the eternal cosmic consciousness which binds all races of man together." She knows the thin veneer of civilized society which coats over the savage in the sophisticate and makes rickshaw runner and scholar brothers under the skin.

As a traveler, M. H. carried the wealth of the Indies in a fertile brain and inquiring mind. Everywhere she was profoundly struck "by the instinctive art of primitive races"; and she predicts that many pieces now kept in natural history museums for ethnographical reasons will one day be ranked as genuine art. She is informing to the uninitiated reader and pricks the imagination of the traveled one, when she correlates and compares the various religious practices of old civilizations — the cult of snake worship in Persia, Mexico, India, and Burma, or among the ancestors of the Japanese, the still surviving Ainus; the uses of the masks for ceremonial purposes and the medicine man's strange practices in different countries. She finds parallels in primitive housing, as in Mongolian *yurt* or tent, and Navajo *hogan* or nomadic hut. She indicates similarities between racial types like the Ainus and Mediterranean peoples, and conjectures about the lost continents of Atlantis and Mu.

Her ingenuity and resourcefulness illuminate the enormity of her job. She often modelled types "on the hoof" with a packing case rigged up on a stand at the back of a Ford car, in every kind of weather. Intervals aboard forty different types of ships were never spent in idleness but in frenzied endeavor to finish some head while it was still docketed freshly in her mind. New Mexico saw "the end of it all," and some of the best description in the book is of her visit to her friend and D. H. Lawrence's, Mabel Dodge Luhan at Taos. There she renewed herself mentally and physically in the beauty of spring and early summer. This was necessary, since the well-springs of creation had gone dry after so much tapping.

Malvina Hoffmann, wherever her artistic niche may be in posterity, and however negligible may be ultimately the literary significance of her book, emerges here as a superwoman. She courted danger with a colossal nerve and had the self-confidence of the accomplished craftsman-artist — an in-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trepid temperament, with strength of will and purpose beyond ordinary endurance. She elected a lonely role in life, and an art effected with tiring tools out of a medium more resisting than most. She has wielded her chisel not merely in the desire for self-expression, but in the interests of science and human knowledge. Such gifts and spirit are not to be despised whether revealed in bronze or on the printed page.

The end papers are a needle point tapestry by Ginevra King, showing the world tour of the Field expedition; and the illustrations consist of fine photographs of the sculptures, people, and travel incidents. There is an index, and an appendix of translation from the French.

ELEANOR L. VAN ALEN

DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK. By Walter D. Edmonds. Little, Brown, $2.50.

THREE BAGS FULL. By Roger Burlingame. Harcourt, Brace, $3.00.

REGIONAL LITERATURE when it is well written and authentically constructed revitalizes the historical incidents of the past. Individuals and events become more tangible when portrayed against the colorful and changeable panorama of our early national life. In the past the South and New England dominated this particular field of literature. Now it is upstate New York with Mr. Edmonds telling the story of the forgotten pioneers of the Mohawk Valley during the Revolutionary war and Mr. Burlingame concerned with his imaginary, feudalistic Van Huyten family which he traces, most effectively, over a period of a hundred and thirty years. With exemplary thoroughness, both men have written books that will long be remembered for their fine blending, of the facts of history and the fancies of fiction.

At Oriskany, on a sultry day in August of the year 1777, General Herkimer, with his inadequately trained New York militia, met the British and Indians under the leadership of Barry St. Leger and Joseph Brant. After a short while the battle became a mere hand-to-hand conflict, interspersed with the usual atrocities that soon became synonymous with Indian and Tory warfare along the Mohawk. Old Herkimer, despite

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his shattered leg, bravely directed the fight which culminated in a draw. The British were more than surprised at this demonstration of grit on the part of the militiamen, and, as a direct result of the battle, St. Leger was prevented from joining Burgoyne, already on his march southward. Thus the wilderness battle of Oriskany had a decided influence on the outcome of the Revolution.

Gilbert Martin, a poor backwoods farmer, was a member of the militia from Deerfield settlement. He and his wife Lana are Mr. Edmonds' two principle characters. With typical pioneer courage they had cleared the land and built a home on the frontier of Tryon county among the German Palatines. Settled originally by the British, this part of the upper Mohawk served as a barrier against the dreaded Indian attacks of the day. Gil and Lana did not enjoy peace for very long. The savage border struggle of the Revolution descended upon them, and without knowing why, they were forced to endure all degrees of privation. Their home and wheatfield were burned and they were compelled to flee to the very uncertain protection of Arabia Stone Stockade, going, ultimately, to the more protective Fort Herkimer.

In his novel Mr. Edmonds utilizes every potentiality of the Revolutionary drama of the section. With fine historical insight and proportion he presents a panoramic, and yet detailed view of the exciting lives of the people of the valley and the momentous forces that swept them along like so many straws in the current. Far from being idealized by the author, they are portrayed as living human beings with the same faults and aspirations as the men and women who dwell in the Mohawk valley region today. Mr. Edmonds' delineation of individual characters, however, is not always deft. I believe that he should have devoted more attention to the portrayal of the inner, emotional conflicts surging, at times, within the minds of Gil and Lana. And this particularly so in the case of Lana who, although sensitive to beauty, remains a slightly inarticulate and pathetic creature, a plaything in the hands of an uncompromising fate.

All of Mr. Edmonds' characters, whether real or imaginary, are convincing to the extent that we can visualize their physical proportions and perceive the events in which they played

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a part. One would prefer, however, a better insight into their thoughts. Mr. Edmonds does not account clearly for the apathetic attitude of the settlers in the face of recurrent Indian attacks, each more brutal than the other. Still less can one account for the pleasantly disinterested stand taken by the Continental Congress with respect to the sufferings of the people in the frontier lands.

Realism and action predominate in this novel. Its characters speak the language of men and women face to face with the elemental things of life. The dialogue, throughout, has the tang of earthy, racy speech. At times, however, the action becomes too kaleidoscopic; there is altogether too much shifting of scene which tends to break up the general continuity of the narrative. This episodic element is apparent when the action switches from the ill-fated John Wolff in his Newgate Prison in Connecticut to Dr. Petry's combination office and general store in Herkimer and then to the home of the redoutable Mrs. McKlennar at Deerfield settlement. Despite this, such real characters in the drama of the Revolution as General Herkimer, Captain Demooth, Dr. Petry and Marinus Willett are authentically portrayed, while to his imaginary characters, the Martins, the Realls, the Weavers and the Wolffs, Mr. Edmonds has given, in most cases, lifelike stature.

General Herkimer's death, the burning of the Martin cabin and the death of young John Weaver in the fight at Mount's mill, followed by the visit of his wife Mary, guided by Gil and Blue Buck, the old Indian scout, to the lonely grave in the forest, are among the most memorable scenes in the book. Adam Helmer's long run through the woods to warn the defenders of the fort of the impending Indian attack and the work of the trapper-scout, Joe Boleo, are described most realistically. The whole book throbs with the life of a hostile frontier. It strikes the keynote of indomitable courage in the face of terrifying obstacles, the typical pioneer concept that, in a large measure, made possible the America we know today. It is one of the finer historical novels of our day, a book that should be read by every American for, although it deals with a period that is somewhat remote, chronologically, it nevertheless expounds a philosophy of national life that should be engendered in the American mind. Mr. Edmonds, already well

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

known for his excellent stories of the Erie canal, has, in *Drums Along the Mohawk*, written a novel of great power and intensity, set against the colorful background of a turbulent period. I think that one of the distinctive features of the novel is the attitude of Gil and Lana towards the land. Despite the belligerency of man and the whims of nature, they stuck to their acres; they had faith in the land and both lived to see that faith justified.

Mr. Burlingame's lusty, vigorously American novel is also panoramic in scope and, in many respects, akin to Mr. Edmonds' book. It is history come to life. In 1795 when Hendrik Van Huyten, accompanied by his friend Pieter de Groot struggled through the forests of the Mohawk valley, they came, finally, to a beautiful lake nestled snugly in the rolling hills. Its placid waters and the undisturbed calm of the vicinity produced an awesome effect upon both men. Hendrik, then and there, decided that this was the spot for the home that he had always wanted. From the Holland Land Company he acquired a feudal domain and thus became the patroon of the lake, undisputed master of all that he surveyed. At first he built only a log cabin. There he brought his wife Maria, Pieter's sister. As the years passed Hendrik prospered and, eventually, built a mansion, a more tangible sign of his patroonship. Soon a town grew up nearby, with the mansion as the focal point of interest and the arbiter of the social and cultural heritage of the section. Then a "lamentable" thing happened. The "damned Jankes" moved into the surrounding valleys. For the most part they were farmers from Connecticut who had trekked westward in search of more fertile land. They were sagacious, liberty-loving men, men of independent character and opinion to whom the idea of a lake aristocracy was obnoxious. Members of the manor family referred to the little community as Van Huyten but the citizens, themselves, preferred to call it by the rather prosaic name of Glenvil, the name which clung to it throughout the years. Old Hendrik, who concealed a tender heart by a gruff and overbearing manner, never quite understood the point of view of the villagers. As the generations moved on, the feudal control of the Van Huytens over the village waned. This was not so, however, of their influence.

Hard-swearing and hard-drinking Hendrik Van Huyten,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the first, is one of the best drawn characters in the book. He is filled with a vibrant zest for life. The influence of his dominating personality is felt on every page and reflected in most of the characters, particularly in those of the black sheep offshoot of his family. Old Hendrik loved the lake and meant to keep the villagers as far away from it as possible. This he and his descendants actually did for some seventy years. The Van Huyten name and effective lobbying at Albany made this possible. But the people grew more resentful as they became financially stronger. The struggle went on for three generations, with the Van Huytens giving way slowly. The story of how the people finally acquired the right to the lake makes a fascinating chronicle of upstate New York life during the critical years of expansion and development. The Canal came first and then the railroad. Glenvil remained, however, little affected by them. It was not until the first decade of the twentieth century that the town felt the tempo of modern progress with all its mass production and inefficient efficiency.

Concomitant with the story of Glenvil's slow metamorphosis from an idyllic rural community to a "smart" one, Mr. Burlingame maintains a double narrative sequence in describing the rather apathetic lives of the inhabitants of the mansion, the smugly respectable Van Huytens and the "diluted" strain that lived in the town. These disinherited descendants, who had fraternized with the Irish "Canawalers," adopted the common name of Hooten. Despised, on the one hand, by the accredited members of the family, they were persecuted by the townspeople and regarded as a group of drunken, lazy profligates. The interplay of the two themes and the ultimate conclusion attained in the lives of Dick and Ruth, the modern descendants of both lines, results in a powerful novel that deserves to be one of the best read books of the season.

Wild Bill Hooten, old Hendrik's grandson, in his adventures on the Erie canal affords the reader a glimpse of the colorful, early days of that great project which made possible the rapid development of New York state. Mr. Burlingame's story moves along at a leisurely pace. While reading the novel I marveled at the author's ability to maintain sustained narrative interest over a period of time approximating a century and a half. It is a feat of genuine literary dexterity in these days of long

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

novels that very often, in the complexity of their plots and the number of their characters, lag in reader interest. This is certainly not the case with Mr. Burlingame's work. *Three Bags Full* is a fine example of literary craftsmanship.

The story of the Van Huyten family history, in all its ramifications, is not Mr. Burlingame's sole consideration. Together with it, we read of the homely mode of life in Glenvil, of the ministrations of the pathetic Mary Brice, an outsider, who cared for the poor and sick of the town and the outlying rural section, herself a staunch champion of popular rights. The idea of improving Glenvil was fixed in her mind. But, when Cyrus Meachem, the big industrialist, broke into lake society and with typical civic pride made Glenvil a "bigger and better" place in which to live, Mary was so disappointed at the outcome, so completely disillusioned, even with the fruits of her own labors that she left Glenvil forever. Mr. Burlingame's portraits of the generations of country doctors all descendants of the "bleeder," Meyrick Jully, who came shortly after old Hendrik, are convincingly true to life. He has skilfully manipulated the whole colorful pageant of the different periods of upstate history and has interwoven with it the very human story of the Van Huytens, those of the primogeniture as well as those of the off-branch. In some respects the Van Huyten saga may be likened to the memorable *Forsyte Saga*, but there is this essential difference: Mr. Burlingame's work is American to the core, his themes and characters are permeated with the lustiness and intensity of American life. Certainly *Three Bags Full* is a representative American novel. In every sense of the word it deserves the same popular interest that Mr. Edmonds' book has won for itself on the basis of sheer readability. Both works are distinctive contributions to Americana.

EDWARD J. CLARKE

THE LONG NIGHT. By Andrew Lytle. Bobbs-Merrill, $2.50.

ANDREW LYTLE dares begin *The Long Night* with a description of the effect the tale has had on a listener: "His voice stopped suddenly, as a clock might stop. I remember the room for a moment seemed to hang in a hiatus of time, in such

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a hiatus as only the body can know when the heart's last stroke sounds down the blood stream . . . the steady fall of his words had beat all the warmth out of my senses, until terror crept over my body, leaving it defenseless in the grip of rigid nerves." On laying down the book the reader is forced to admit, marveling, that the author has made good his boast.

Cameron McIvor, a farmer of family and consequence from Georgia, is moving his household westward when Tyson Lovell, a chance-encountered planter, persuades him to settle on rich Alabama land. Before long McIvor discovers that this planter is the leader of a slave-and-stock-stealing gang which includes many of his neighbors in the district. Lovell, finding that he cannot terrorize McIvor into removal or silence, craftily succeeds in blackening the newcomer's name in the community and has him murdered with revolting cowardice. McIvor's family soon realize that the law itself is so corrupted by the power of the gang that it cannot hope to clear its name nor bring the criminals to justice. The victim's kinsmen thereupon undertake to avenge the foul murder.

The theme is swept along by a series of thrillingly executed deeds of violence, each complete in itself, each contributing to the cumulative impact. The mysterious force of retribution, at first comprising most of the male clansmen, finally singled down to the youngest son of Cameron McIvor. The boy, named Pleasant with rueful irony, becomes the instrument of fate as terrible as any hero in legend.

The reader is made partner to the secret avengers that scourge the gang scattered throughout the cowering countryside — a force that strikes without trace, warning or fail, until the War, intervening, engulfs the just with the unjust. The blood feud is swallowed in the agony of a nation. It is at this point, where the hero's ruthless errand leads him with the army into the battle of Shiloh, that Mr. Lytle's greatest power is displayed. The relation of the individual to the mass, the constant shift in focus and angle, is handled with a skill that one cannot help comparing to Tolstoi's or to that of the greatest producers of drama — that skill shown, for instance, in the weaving of character upon mob in Reinhardt's production of *Danton's Death.* Pleasant's pursuit of his satanic oath through the carnage of the war relates the individual figure to the vast

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

background of strife, so that we see his personal history against the drama at heroic scale.

Incidental to the plot we are shown, in fullest color and relief, the middle South one generation removed from frontier conditions. We read of such doings as a militia muster, a wake, a horse-breaking, a man hunt, a bee-swarming, and one poignant love idyl. These are an elemental people, passionate, quick to killing and to love-making, independent yet fiercely clannish, rough, lewd, humorous, supremely vital. Mr. Lytle is at no pains to spare us the hardship, cruelty and grossness of their life. It is an era in our national evolution corresponding to the Scotland of the border raids, with feats of prowess as worthy to be sung.

The urban American of today, at the end of such a story, finds himself wondering somewhat blankly what we have missed, what has thinned our heritage. For these Alabama farmers are the stuff of which great cultures are made, great faiths arise. A nation so heroic in its adolescence, must, one feels, reach stature in maturity.

The Long Night contains several narrative obstructions, one or two of them grave enough to wreck any novel impelled by less power. The opening chapter, told in the words of the hero's nephew, is not justified by any subsequent reference to him. The unexplained shift from the first person singular to the third is shocking. There are minor causes for dissatisfaction. We are never told that Pleasant's nephew had been well known to him since boyhood, whereas the nephew had always assumed that his uncle was dead, nor why Squire Hicks was subject to Pleasant's command and avoided a face-to-face encounter with him. This novel, like all great ones, rushes in a torrent which ignores the well ordered channels of the craft.

American regional history is richer for the happy circumstance that this stupendous story fell to a writer who drives the wild team of History and Fiction with such swift sureness. Even if Mr. Lytle had not indicated, in his prefatory letter, that the outlines are drawn from fact, one would suspect it, because fact is subject to no such limitations of plausibility as is fancy masked as fact. That one accepts so completely the illusion of the background is undoubtedly the story's major triumph. This is one of those rare feats in any literature, a re-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

creation of the past without the dust of research, or the gilt lace of the costume piece, and unique in the literature of the ante-bellum South.

After the superb battle scenes, at the end, one realizes the full implications of this amazing book. Having mounted the relentless pinnacle of his passion, Pleasant sees the consequences to one he loves, and so there is revealed his terrible isolation from humanity. This shift from action to realization, the sudden focus on the hero's soul-destructive dilemma, justifies the dire theme and lifts *The Long Night* to the realm of high tragedy.

CHAUNCEY STILLMAN

THE ENCHANTED VOYAGE. By Robert Nathan. Knopf, $2.00.

IN FEBRUARY, 1933, a dark cloud lay over the land. Banks were closing with a snowball-rolling-down-hill rapidity. Within the twelve-month, former soldiers of the United States (however wrongly they had got there) were being tear-gassed out of poor huts by the Potomac. The stock market, which, by some quirk of the imagination, is regarded as the sure indicator of national wellbeing, looked like a thermometer during a cold wave. The rich, such of them as still were rich, and perhaps even those who were merely supposed to be rich, feared a revolution; while the poor, if we can believe all those tub-thumpers who hoped to get elected to soft berths by saying so, feared that there would not be one. In other words, all was not exactly well.

But a year later, things had changed. If a bright sky was not overhead, at least streaks of blue suggested clearing weather. And then all the "prophets after the fact" as my friend, Pietro Aretino, called them four hundred years ago, had their day. Those of them who were Republican spoke very learnedly of "business cycles" and of "the inevitable upswing." Those who were Democrats said that the Great White Father had pulled out of his hat this white rabbit. I will side with neither of them. I will say only that while the balances trembled, a small book was thrown into the more hopeful side. It dealt with a certain Mr. Otkar, a second hand dealer, who had saved nothing from the debacle but "a great bed garlanded with cupids;" with a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Morris Rosenberg whose violin-playing, according to the Pittsburg *Times*, was "adequate;" with Michael Sweeney, a street cleaner "who was too shy to talk" but "who had music in his soul;" with his wife, Mary, who kept faith in God even though people starved while the Methodists were permitted to raise $50,000 "to teach black ignorance to the heathen;" with Elizabeth Cheney who sold love because "it's all I have;" and finally with Mr. Sheridan, the banker, who was against hoarding. How these lives were bound together I will not say. For *One More Spring* is by now a minor classic and if you have not read it, it is your loss.

That was all three years ago. And since then Mr. Nathan has brought out at least two books. But now for the first time he ventures back into the same field. Like its predecessor, *The Enchanted Voyage* is a brave fantasy wherein perplexed souls seek a sort of happiness. I am sorry that I cannot report a book equal to the other one. But unless we have another depression or another situation wherein all hearts are involved simultaneously in the same anguishes, that is hardly likely. Mr. Nathan is not to blame; the world is, for not providing him with the subject. But if the new book is slighter than *One More Spring* it is definitely not a failure. Here is the difference. *One More Spring* is something you will read and enjoy and will afterwards have with you forever. You will read *The Enchanted Voyage* and you will enjoy it, but it may slip from your mind.

Yet it has similar characters. Its Mr. Otkar is a Hector Pecket who believes that people are more unkind than fishes because fishes at least "have to imagine that they are hungry before they eat each other." Its Elizabeth Cheney is her exact opposite, Mary Kelly, a waitress on the Fordham Road, who is keeping herself pure until Mr. Right comes along. It has an H. Williams, dentist, who fills teeth and grinds knives and scissors. And a Mrs. Pecket who misses Hector "not so much out of tenderness as from a sense of possession; he was her capital with which she did her works of the spirit." And a Mr. Schulz, the butcher, who was very practical, and who used everything, "the livers, the lights . . . the tail, even." And a good many more.

As to the plot, I will not give it away other than to say that it is actually an enchanted voyage in which the sloop *Sarah*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pecket, mounted on wheels, sails, defying low bridges and the laws of aerodynamics, from the Bronx to the Pomunkey river in Virginia. And further, that there is of course a harmless love story.

"The characters," says Mr. Nathan, doubtless advised by Mr. Schulz's lawyer, "and situations in this work are wholly fictional and imaginary, and do not portray and are not intended to portray any actual persons or parties."

Skeptic as I am, I believe him. For certainly as seagoing a character as Cap'n Hector Pecket would have been more careful in his salty terminology. He might have called the forestay, the foreward stay. But could he have spoken of a black nun buoy? Strangely enough, Mr. Nathan, there are no black nun buoys. A nun buoy is red. Its black equivalent is a can.

THOMAS CALDECOT CHUBB

DEATH OF A MAN. By Kay Boyle. Harcourt, Brace, $2.50.

THE WRITING of Kay Boyle is not for him who runs to read. The long sentences of her style dash up the path of thought at a speed no mountain climber would ever attempt. But remembered beauty should carry those who know her writing as far as page 6 in *Death of a Man*. There a breathless reader can pause for a moment, sit down for a moment and think, "Oh, yes; this is Kay Boyle. Among these words there will be a zest, a gusto for living, a sympathy for people, acute observation, all she puts into her work."

Less obscure than James Joyce, less mumble-jumble than Gertrude Stein, there is coherence in Miss Boyle's so-called modern style of writing. As you mount the rugged crags of thought, you feel that she has some reason for using words and punctuation as she does. Those reasons may be her own. She is looking for clarity to express emotions and scenes. Often she achieves it; and if the readers are keen, it is possible to see a rare thing in modern writing. That rare thing is a sense of humor between the lines, implicit in the pages — for explicit comic relief would be unsuitable in this book.

Unfortunately, it is a book, wherein a talent for short stories is used wastefully.

Roughly speaking, *Death of a Man* is the story of two con-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trasted characters in present-day Austria. The man is a Nazi. The girl is an American, spoiled, rich. An old theme, forever new, the theme of love and loyalty. To outline it like this is to express nothing whatever of the book. Any attempt at synopsis would be about as adequate as to make an exact definition of the words "love" and "loyalty." In and around the two contrasted main characters, the theme is woven, with too many a splendid short story lost by the wayside.

Carping critics may growl that a novel should be written thus and so. Perhaps they can explain exactly how; and perhaps they are right. The more imaginative will be glad that *Death of a Man* bears the unmistakable imprint of sincere writing. Thoughtfully, they may hold to themselves the pictures it gives of fires burning on the sides of mountains far from where they may be; and they may cherish a quick impression of the *Infektionhaus:* "the faces of children who had never had anything, not something once in a while but never anything at all, and they were watching . . . ".

Miss Boyle is more impartial than most people in describing a country not her own. She writes quietly of Austria with a knowledge no tourist on vacation can ever get. She has lived and gone about her own business of working in that country, not for a few weeks; but longer. For the scenes in the hospital alone, the book would be worth reading. It is no relief worker's earnest account of suffering children. It is the first-hand knowledge of a practiced writer who knows the country. By its economy of gruesome details, it is the more impressive. Lords of far-flung battle lines did things to Austria and many countries, from which children still suffer; and Miss Boyle will not have us forget: "Christl had never seen a doll before and she cried when Dr. Prochaska put it into the bed with her and cried when he took it out! And Dr. Prochaska picked Christl up out of bed and put her on his shoulders and he went running and jumping . . . and she held tight to his hair, not knowing how to laugh with the rubber cork in her mouth, but still not crying, the windpipe he had cut so neatly for her clamped fast in the golden chain she always wore."

There are the two lay sisters, Sister Marianna and Sister Resi, in the *Infektionhaus,* there so many years, doing the work in the children's wards, despised by the actual sisters of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

religious order running the place. They are a perfect short story in themselves.

There is Muti Praxlmann, wife of the owner of the *Gasthaus*, defying the neighbors, the customs, the very soil of her country and her own family: "even poor Gertrud had once passed her by the church in Kirchstadt, not suspecting for an instant that her own flesh and blood could have been so fine and worldly a presence." That is another story.

So one could go on indefinitely, seeing and reading stories within stories in *Death of a Man.* Since writing that slim volume *Wedding Day and Other Stories* with the unforgettable picture of a girl riding across the prairie on a horse, Kay Boyle has grown. Novelist she is not; nor ever will be. She has a sense of title, fit and apt. She has many things to make her writing worth the trouble of reading. If the scope and vision of the novelist are lacking, does it matter? It does seem important that out of the many who have felt themselves called upon to write English in the newer imagery, she should have been chosen to give more coherence to her style than a great many others. Of course it may be that she is like the gawky boy at one of the many Southern universities, who went to the president and said that he wanted to change all his courses from engineering to theology, because he had had a message. What message? Well, it was a dream, a sign in the sky in fiery letters. What letters? P.C. What, said the president, do those letters mean? Preach Christ, said the boy, every hair on his head wild with determination. Are you sure, said the president, that they did not mean Plow Corn?

Whether Miss Boyle is using her particular p.c. in the best way — who can know? So long as her writing keeps the earmarks of sincerity, some of us will read it, hoping always for more short stories.

HELEN MORAN

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contributors' Column

Verne Bright is a farmer in Aloha, Oregon. We take pride in publishing as the discovery of the Quarter, this single section from Mr. Bright's long narrative poem in preparation, which is to be called *Mountain Man.* It is the story of Daniel Boone's grandson, Jefferson Boone.

Lewis Gallentière was roused to contradict some of Gilbert Seldes's argument in his book, *Mainland.* Mr. Gallentière speaks from the experience of more than fifteen years in international banking, a profession in which he is still active. He is an American, born in Chicago.

Thornton Delehanty was motion picture critic on the New York *Post* for more than six years. Since then he has contributed to many magazines on the theater and motion pictures.

Robert P. Tristram Coffin's verse is familiar to our readers. His book of poems, *Salt Water Farm* will be published soon by MacMillan.

Dr. Eric M. Matsner has recently returned from Puerto Rico where he went at the invitation of the Puerto Rican Medical Association. Dr. Matsner is a practicing gynecologist and obstetrician. As medical director of the American Birth Control League and executive secretary of the National Medical Council on Birth Control, he is an authority on the control of human fertility. *William Laidlaw* accompanied Dr. Matsner to Puerto Rico. He is a free-lance writer on foreign affairs and is at present at work on a novel.

Edward M. Barrows has been in newspaper work for years in middle-western cities. He has published a biography of Mathew Calbraith Perry, *The Great Commodore,* and articles and stories. At present he is one of the editors of *The American Guide.*

Mr. Barrows' friendly notes on his old schoolmate, George Bellows, were read the other day by another American painter, Ben Ali Haggin, who saw George Bellows almost every day for several years. Mr. Haggin said: "It might interest your readers to know how once I witnessed a program of Bellows' versatile accomplishments enacted by him quite spontaneously during the course of a single day. One afternoon, in the summer of 1909, I was in my studio preparing to leave for Rhode Island where my little daughter was to be christened the following day. Suddenly George rushed in to expound some theory. He had been busy at his easel on a new picture and as usual his hands and clothes were covered with paint. He was excited and must have been intensely interested in his subject for he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drove in the cab with me to the Grand Central station in order to continue his violent oration. We hurried through the ticket gate to catch the train and I persuaded him to get aboard and travel as far as 125th St. On arriving there, Bellows was still talking, and I suggested that he come the whole way. He saw no reason why he shouldn't, provided I could lend him pajamas. Five hours later we got off at Wakefield where I happened to meet the captain of the local ball team who was very much distressed. His star, a shortstop, was ill, and defeat by the visiting Wickfords in a game scheduled also for the next day, seemed inevitable to him. I at once suggested Bellows as substitute. The captain, though dubious, signed him up. In the morning George borrowed my paints, went out into the fields, and in two hours returned with a landscape. A few moments before my daughter's christening Bellows was invested with a cassock and cotta which were decidedly too short for him, but by hastily piling up some of the flowers in front of the choir stall his long legs and painting trousers were hidden. He was in good baritone voice that day, sang a solo, and looked like a saint in his robes.

That afternoon he played ball for Wakefield. Though he played shortstop he seemed to be everywhere at once, covering third and second base as well, and never once making a wild throw to first. *This time* he won the game for the home team and I was looked on suspiciously by Wickford as having provided a 'pro' for Wakefield."

Tristram Livingstone is the pseudonym of a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. His poems appear frequently in the magazines.

Richard Dana Skinner is familiar to our readers as a contributor on economic and literary subjects, and as one of our associate editors, lately resigned to write his new book, *American Horizons*.

Channing Pollock is well known to all of us who go to the theater, attend lectures, or read the magazines.

Daniel Whitehead Hicky is from Atlanta, Georgia. He is the author of three volumes of poetry, *Bright Harbor*, *Thirteen Sonnets of Georgia*, and *Call Back the Spring*.

Wilson McCarty is an American, now in London writing feature articles for the British press. This story is one of his few pieces of fiction.

William R. Benét is one of our best known poets. He is author of ten books of poetry, a novel, a nonsense story for children, and a book of fugitive pieces most of which appeared in *The Saturday Review of Literature* with which periodical he has been editorially connected for the past sixteen years.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Malcolm R. Eiselen is Professor of History and Political Science at the College of the Pacific, Stockton, California.

Elizabeth Morrow, wife of the late Dwight W. Morrow, contributes verse to many magazines.

Sculley Bradley is a member of the faculty in the Department of English, University of Pennsylvania. He is author of two biographies, *George Henry Boker, Poet and Patiot* (1927) and *Henry Charles Lea* (1931).

Richard S. Reynolds, besides being a poet, is president of the Reynolds Metals Company.

Winifred Welles intends to publish a book on her Connecticut childhood, of which *A Connecticut Attic* will be a part. Up to this time her writing has been in verse. Viking Press has published four books of her poetry, the last one, *Spectacle for Scholars.*

Leonora Speyer won the Pulitzer prize for poetry in 1926. She is an accomplished musician, having been violin soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Erna Fergusson's German grandfather came across the plains, afoot, with a wagon train in 1848 and eventually settled in Albuquerque, New Mexico where Miss Fergusson was born. She has written for Albuquerque newspapers on Indian affairs and has published a book on the Indian ceremonial dances.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933, of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, for October 1, 1936.

STATE OF NEW YORK } ss.
COUNTY OF NEW YORK }

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared John Pell, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher: The North American Review Corporation, 597 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y.; Editor: John Pell, 597 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor: James H. Van Alen, 597 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y.; Business Manager, James H. Van Alen, 597 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Edgar B. Davis, Luling, Texas; Walter B. Mahony, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

JOHN PELL, *Editor.*

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1936.

R. A. KELLEY, *Notary Public.*

(My commission expires March 30, 1938.)
[SEAL]

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED